

BANDWAGON

THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

MARCH-APRIL 2006

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FRED D. PFENING, JR.

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Fred D. Pfening III, Managing Editor

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THE FRONT COVER

This one sheet lithograph, printed by Strobridge, was used by the Barnum and Bailey Circus in 1890. After spending the winter of 1889-1890 in London, the show returned to America with the first of the gigantic spectacles, essentially mime plays accompanied by music, that were popular on large circuses for the next thirty years. While Imre Kiralfy had previously produced several similar shows, Nero was the first of his extravaganzas to be part of a circus performance.

"Excursions From Everywhere" screams the poster, a reference that patrons living long distances from the circus lot could attend the great exhibition by buying a combination ticket that admitted them to the big show, and brought them to it in specially-chartered railroad passenger cars. It was a good deal for both businesses: circuses expanded the area from which they drew customers, and railroads utilized surplus rolling stock that otherwise would be sitting idle. While excursions dated back to the 1850s, they became commonplace

in the late 1870s and early 1880s when the industry's biggest companies made the great conversion from traveling behind horses to traveling behind locomotives. For the first time, field-shows were no longer restricted to the 15 to 20 miles horses could travel each night. Now they could play only the larger cities and skip the small towns that had previously been on the route.

Thus, the biggest and the best circuses stopped appearing in small town America. This void was partially filled by a number of second-rate troupes that traded at the crossroads, and by excursions, such as those advertised on this bill, that brought the rustics to the big shows rather than the big shows to them.

This image, a masterpiece of commercial art, is courtesy of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Tibbals Digital Collection.

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CORRECTION

One of the cutines in the Rieffenachs article in the January-February *Bandwagon* was not correct. The photo on page 23 stated that the Rieffenach sisters were on Ringling-Barnum in 1939. They were not.

DUES NOTICES MAILED

Dues notices and subscriber payments were mailed in April.

Please send your payment for 2006 as soon as possible in the return envelope provided.

Payment must be received by July first or your name will be removed from the mailing list.

THE CIRCUS YEAR IN REVIEW

The 2005 Season



By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

The 2005 circus season was rather typical of recent years. Two shows from 2004 returned to the road but did not last long. A small circus changed hands. A new show opened in the fall. One from England showed up in California. UniverSoul toured only one show and Cirque du Soleil introduced a new traveling unit. Some shows brought home money, others made it to closing time breaking even. Is the circus alive and well in the United States? Yes, sixty circuses were in operation during the year.

The 135th edition of the Greatest

Brian and Tina Miser opened the Red unit performance. Feld Entertainment photo.



The big elephant number on Carson & Barnes in 2005. John Wells photo.

Show on Earth opened in Tampa on January 5-9 traveling on 57 railroad cars. The Red unit of Ringling-Barnum featured Bello Nock. Tyron McFarlan was the new ringmaster.

Brian and Tina Miser opened the show with a double cannon shot. Tabayara Maluenda, new to the show, presented a group of tigers. Others in the performance were a large group of Mongolian acrobats; Sasha Houcke with twelve horses and six zebras; the Windy City Acrobats; the Rodriguez space wheel; Alberto Aquilar and Maurico on the high wire; the Sky Surfers, a ten person flying act; and the baby elephants Asha and Rudy with ten grown-up pachyderms..

Bello Nock, who was injured during rehearsals and saw limited action at the season's start, was performing all of his routine by the time the show played Jacksonville, January 26-29.

The Ringling-Bar-



Bello Nock with friends. Feld Entertainment photo.

num Blue unit began its second season in Miami on January 17. The stars of the show were David Larible, Sylvia Zerbini, and Crazy Wilson.

Billboard advertising the Red unit in Baltimore. Ed Meals photos





Sisters Bernard Overkamp and Dorothy Fabritze on the Ringling Red unit. Carlos Antonio photo.

Jeff Steele was general manager, and Kevin Venardos was ringmaster. While this unit was in Houston the *Chronicle* published an article about Sister Bernard Overkamp and Sister Dorothy Fabritze, Catholic nuns with the show. The article said, "The two Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus do more than spread the word of God. They're also part of the circus: Sister Fabritze opens and closes the curtains during the two-hour shows; Sister Overkamp tends to the performers' wardrobe.

"When they're not on circus duty, they spend hours teaching religious-instruction classes for Catholics and non-Catholics, as well as counseling and listening to the problems and joys of the circus workers. The nuns also arrange Mass for Catholics, usu-

Crazy Wilson on the sky wheel. Paul Gutheil photo.



ally on Saturdays between shows."

The Blue show closed on November 20 in St. Louis. The Ringling-Barnum Hometown Edition, also known as the Gold unit, began its second season in January playing Tallahassee from January 26-30. Dothan, Alabama and Baton Rouge, Louisiana followed. In March it was in Kansas and

Nebraska. A long jump from Kearney, Nebraska took the show to Mexico City where it played from March 23 to April 3. Guadalajara was shown April 4-10, and Monterey, April 13-17. It was back in America at Laredo, Texas, April 21-24, remaining in that state through June. On August 11-13 it was in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

A move into Canada at Edmonton, Alberta on September 7 was delayed by a day due to problems in crossing the border. Calgary, Alberta was played September 14-18 and Grand Prairie, Alberta, September 23-25. It came back to the United States at Billings, Montana, September 29-October 2. In a long jump the circus went from Topeka, Kansas to Pikeville, Kentucky, November 18-20. The year ended at San Juan, Puerto Rico, December 27 to January 1, 2006. While in San Juan the two elephants were spooked and one was removed from the show. Silva Zerbini joined the Gold show after closing with the Blue unit.

By late fall rumors circulated that major changes would be made to the new Blue unit. Those involved with the new show were told not to discuss the plans. There was no comment from the Feld organization until an announcement on December 7 that read, "In a bold move designed to create an entirely contemporary and interactive circus experience, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey has assembled a team of television, film and stage veterans to redefine The Greatest Show on Earth which premieres January 4, 2006 at Tampa's St. Pete Times Forum. The creative team—completely new to producing

any type of circus production—is currently at work building the new 136th edition of Ringling Bros. that is guaranteed to put audiences closer to the action than ever before.

"This all-new production is introducing the biggest changes Ringling Bros. has experienced in 50 years," said Kenneth Feld, CEO and producer of Ringling Bros. "Our single goal in rethinking The Greatest Show on Earth was to give families a more intimate, interactive and up-close experience."



Kenneth and Nicole Feld. Feld Entertainment photo.

"In just 40 days our creative team, performers and crew will be rehearsing and premiering a Ringling Bros. production that we've been hard at work creating for over a year," said Kenneth Feld. "This Ringling Bros. winter quarters is not only magic in the making, but history-making."

The announcement listed the new creative people: Shanda Sawyer, director, writer; Colleen Atwood, costume designer; Robert Brill, production designer; Bradley Zweig, writer and Carla Kama, choreographer. In no way, however, were details of the new unit exposed.

The Almanac, of Potomac, Maryland, published an April 6 article about Kenneth Feld. It stated in part, "Kenneth Feld, a Potomac resident of 30 years, is chairman and CEO of Feld Entertainment, which owns the Ringling-Barnum Circus and the Disney on Ice productions as well as stage shows and other enter-

tainment ventures. It is one of the world's largest live entertainment companies. The company has 2500 employees and regional offices in New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Hong Kong and Amsterdam. "In 2000 *Forbes* magazine ranked Feld among the nation's richest men, with a personal fortune of \$775 million—mostly grown from the company acquired for just \$23 million in 1982 after selling it to the toy company Mattel during the 1970s, according to the magazine.

"Feld and his wife Bonnie have three daughters—Nicole, 27, Alana, 25 and Juliette, 21—all of whom grew up in Potomac and attended Holton Arms. Juliette is a senior at the University of Chicago while Nicole and Alana have both joined the family business, after working elsewhere. Nicole Feld came on board in 2001 and Alana Feld joined in 2003."

Early in March rumors circulated that Ringling-Barnum would return to Sarasota if a deal could be struck between the show and the Sarasota fairgrounds to use its arena for rehearsing the new unit at the end of each year. The suggestion was that a new fairgrounds would be built east of Sarasota, near Interstate 95, that would include a new large arena. Nothing came of this suggestion, but at the end of the year there was movement afoot for such action.

On April 21 a three hundred ten pound Asian female elephant named Aree was born at the Ringling-Barnum Center for Elephant Conservation. This was the seventeenth elephant born at the compound. On June 1 the center announced its 18th elephant birth, this one a male named Irvin in honor of Irvin Feld. During the summer an Asian male elephant was loaned to the Fort Worth zoo in an effort to increase the reproduction rates of the zoo's female elephants. Casey and Rajah, two lucky Ringling bulls, were identified as good genetic matches for three of the Fort Worth females. On June 30 Ringling-Barnum announced it would fund ongoing research on herpes viruses being conducted by the National Elephant Herpes Virus Laboratory at the Smithsonian Institution's National Zoological Park. The \$180,000 gift was to be distributed over the next



Cirque du Soleil's Varekia in Columbus, Ohio. Fred Pfening photo.

three years to support the zoo's efforts to treat and ultimately cure this usually fatal disease in young Asian elephants.

Feld Entertainment, Inc. said on June 28 that it had contracted with Mark Wolper to develop and produce a broad range of television programs related to the circus. The scope of the deal included everything from a celebrity-driven reality show to an in-depth documentary on the operation of The Greatest Show on Earth. On December 16 Ringling-Barnum announced its partnership with the Department of Defense's America Supports You program, established to showcase and communicate America's support for its military forces. The circus planned to expand its relationship with the military in the form of special ticket offers, personal appearances at military installations, fund raising opportunities, and special recognition of military personnel during performances. A bronze statue of Gunther Gebel-

The new Corteo show on a lot in 2005. Daniel Terdiman photo.



Williams was unveiled at the defunct train depot in Venice, Florida on December 6.

Cirque du Soleil's traveling shows, Saltimbanco, Alegria, Quidam, and Dralion, played outside the United States in 2005. Varekai played North America. It was at Columbus,

Ohio starting on August 11 and wowed 'em as Dralion had done in 2003. The 38 performances drew 82,570 people into the 2,600 seat Grand Chapiteau.

Soleil offered acts for private parties and commercial events. On June 25 twelve Soleil performers presented a forty-five minute show for a private party in Columbus. The acts included a three-pole routine, hand balancing, twin chignons and a double acrobatic balancing act. The costumes and taped music were typical Soleil.

A new traveling show, Corteo, opened on April 21 in Montreal. A different style of presentation was introduced, using a divided rotating stage. For the first time Soleil used seating wrapped around the tent. There was no rear stage as in other productions. Although *Variety's* review of Corteo's opening night was a little tough, other critics later proclaimed it one of Soleil's best efforts. After a stand in Toronto, the show moved to Minneapolis, opening on September 23. Ticket prices in the Twin Cities were \$41 to \$185. Corteo opened in San Francisco on November 8.

Las Vegas continued to be a tremendous cash cow for Soleil with *Mystere* at Treasure Island; *O* at Bellagio; *Zumanity* at New York New York and *Ka* at MGM playing to sold out audiences. Meanwhile *LaNouba* continued at Disney World.

On February 20 the 60 Minutes television show present-

ed a segment on Soleil which told the history of its Las Vegas shows. On April 13 the *Canadian Press* reported, "The Cirque du Soleil is taking advantage of its popularity in Japan to establish a permanent theater at the Walt Disney Resort in the suburbs of Tokyo."

"The \$140-million project is to include a theater for 2,000 spectators. Oriental Land Co. is providing \$115 million to build an earthquake-proof building, with the remainder coming from the Cirque. An original show is scheduled to premiere in August 2008. The company is also interested in establishing permanent sites in Paris, London and other cities."

USA Today published an article on July 7 about Soleil recruiting world-class athletes, including Olympic veterans. Before they are fit to be on stage, the athletes have to reprogram years of ingrained instincts, such as a rigid posture or focusing on scores. The training program in Montreal lasted 16-weeks.

The article said, "Every April, 50 or 60 athletes are invited to the company's huge industrial-style headquarters on the outskirts of Montreal and instructed in acting, movement, voice and even makeup application, as well as acrobatic and athletic training. They receive a stipend and are housed in dorms. More than half of the trainees will be offered contracts and gradually worked into shows as the cast turns over. Once signed, many athletes stay until their bodies or family demands dictate another lifestyle."

The August 2005 issue of *Playboy* contained ten-pages of photos of the women of Zumanity.

In October, New York developer Stephen M. Ross announced his intent to bring Soleil to West 42th Street. It sparked a bitter collision of art and commerce. An October 27 published report stated, "Mr. Ross is not considering a late-life change to Broadway producer. But he does want to insert the impossibly contorting human circus into a permanent home for a 60-story apartment building he plans to build between Dyer and 10th Avenues."

"Mr. Ross, chairman of Related



Inside the Cortes big top. Cirque du Soleil photo.

Companies, wants to take advantage of a city zoning regulation, 'a theater bonus' created last year to encourage the building and preservation of theatrical space on the stretch of 42nd Street just west of Theater Row. The bonus would enable him to build a taller tower than would normally be allowed and reap the sales of even more valuable apartments, in exchange for building a \$140 million, 1,800-seat theater for Cirque.

"To make way for the project, Related has already demolished the 286-seat Houseman Theater and the 199-seat Fairbanks Theater on 42nd Street." At year's end, the fate of this project was unknown.

Another partnership was born out of the personal friendship between the late George Harrison and Soleil's founder Guy Laliberte. "This show is about living the Beatles experience," said Laliberte. "We want to bring the magic of Cirque du Soleil together with the spirit and passion behind the most beloved rock band of all time to create a single, simple statement of delight."

The November 24 Las Vegas *Business Press* told of the new Cirque production in Vegas, stating, "Cirque du Soleil had signed a landmark deal with Apple Corps Ltd., which holds the rights to the Beatles' catalogue and other creations, to produce and stage an artistic vision based on the Fab Four's music and historical significance by 2006."

The location was to be the Mirage Theater where Siegfried and Roy played for fourteen years. It was expected that more than \$100 million would be spent on complete reconstruction of the theater. Robert

H. Baldwin, president and CEO of Mirage, said "This partnership builds on the solid relationship that already exists between MGM Mirage and Cirque du Soleil. We, too, are thrilled that the union between two premier entertainment icons, the Beatles and Cirque, will come together at the Mirage."

Another interesting deal was announced on January 25 between Clear Channel Entertainment and Soleil to create a

music-oriented production, incorporating innovative staging and the imaginative use of video projections and music. Slated to begin in November, the show, called *Delirium*, didn't begin until early 2006. It was scheduled to play 100 North American arenas, which could have a profound effect on the availability of venues for other circuses and ice shows.

On June 22 Loto-Quebec and Cirque Du Soleil unveiled a proposal to establish a world-class entertainment complex in Montreal. It was hoped the project would help Montreal and Quebec spur the development of the local economy, tourism and the cultural sector. The complex would encompass a 300-room hotel and a 2,500-seat performance hall to accommodate touring productions.

The UniverSoul Circus toured only one show in 2005. It opened in Savannah on February 2. The show traveled on eight show-owned and twenty leased trucks. There were 231 people with the troupe.

Cecil Armstrong (aka Shuckey Ducky) was ringmaster, replacing Cal Dupree who left the organization. Robert "Onionhead" Dunn was the clown. The spec, Caribbean Flava, was newly costumed. The acts were Anatolie, a Russian acrobatic trio; Los Anton, perch pole and hair hang; a Cossack riding act (introduced as the Soul Circus Rough Riders); Richard Rector, space wheel; Patrice Lovely, dog act; Lunga, contortion; Liazeed, balancing act; Jean Claude, strap act; the Gabonese troupe, wire act; and Tyrone Taylor with three Carson & Barnes elephants. The music was recorded

The June 14 Baltimore *Sun* published an article about UniverSoul,

then showing that city, "The circus has become popular for its audience participation and hip-hop flavor is underrated for its traditional acts.

"They consist of renowned troupes from 11 countries that stage 17 acts: a Gabonese high-wire team that performs breathtaking stunts, walking across as a four-man pyramid and on stilts; two performers from Columbia and the Dominican Republic who run and jump (sometimes blindfolded) along a rotating Ferris wheel-like contraption; and the Shanghai Swingers, a trapeze act from Taiwan who employ aerial stunts, including four pairs somersaulting and twisting and catching one another in midair.

"The action is nonstop, buoyed by multicolored spotlights, pulsating, melodic music and a public address announcer who bellows the most redundant question you'll hear during the two-hour show.

"The action takes place under a navy-blue-and-yellow tent (capacity: 2200), with seats close to the floor. The circus will perform 500 shows in 26 cities this year."

UniverSoul paid its usual visit to Detroit, September 8-25. By then Dave Lonergan was on the show with Carson & Barnes elephants Suzy, Becky and Traci.

The circus played the Los Angeles Forum, November 9-20.

Former UniverSoul ringmaster Cal Dupree organized a circus to play to Afro-American audiences at dates that had been successful while he was with UniverSoul. However, he did not have the marketing staff and front end to be successful. Early in the year DuPree, along with his partner Zeke, teamed up with Circo Vasquez. Titled Casual Cal's Bumpin' Big Top, it played Oakland, June 2-5, and Los Angeles, June 9-19. In Los Angeles, Dupree hooked up with radio station KKBt, whose target audience was the Afro-American community. KKBt had a tent in front of the big top for remote broadcasting. The station's web site posted photos of station's tent, as well as banner-like photos of Casual Cal in front of the Vasquez big top. The show also played



The UniverSoul lot in Los Angeles. Jerry Cash photo.

Houston, Texas. It was reported that the four or five stands DuPree played in connection with Vasquez were not money makers.

The show played Cleveland, Ohio in August under Alain Zerbini's former Circus Boreal European big top where the performance included Alain Zerbini's dog act; Benito Landa, juggling; the Ayak broth-



The Casual Cal's Bumpin' Big Top Circus under an Alain Zerbini big top in Cleveland, Ohio. Rich Deptula photo.

ers, double traps; a space wheel and Dulce, hair hang. Buffalo followed, starting on August 11.

The Big Apple Circus opened its 27th touring season at Stone Mountain, Georgia, in February where it day and dated the Ringling-

The new Big Apple big top in Walden, New York. Paul Gutheil photo.



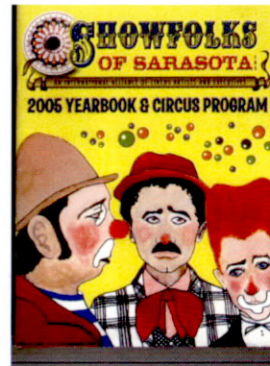
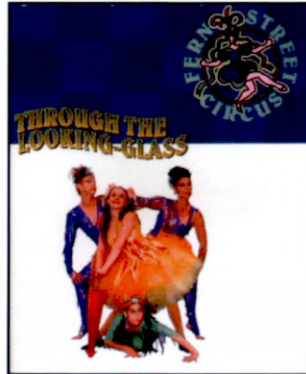
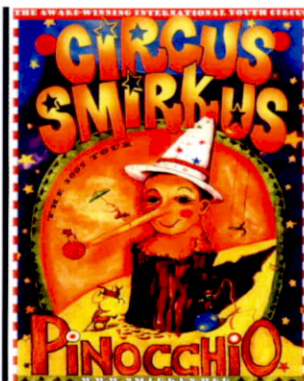
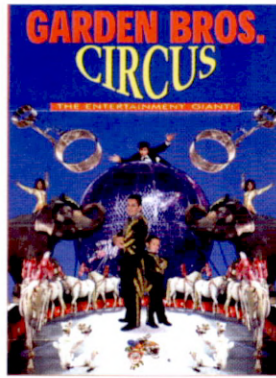
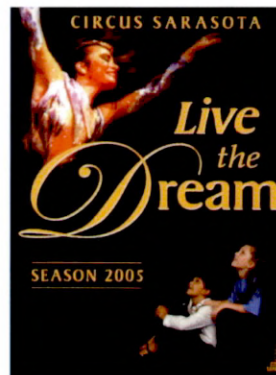
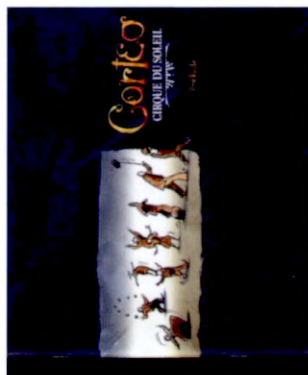
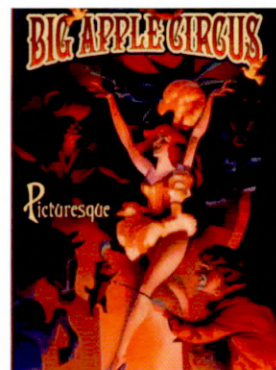
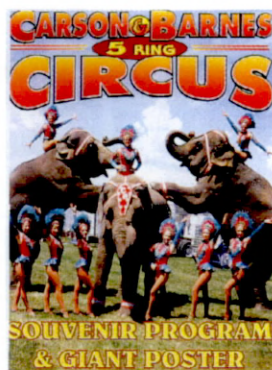
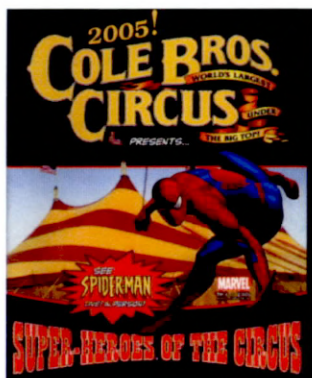
Barnum Blue unit, and UniverSoul Circus, both of which were playing Atlanta at the time.

The show was titled Picturesque. The performance included Barry Lubin; the Mongolian Angels, double trapeze; Vallery, comedy; Kovgar troupe, teeterboard; Mei Ling, hand balancing; Gui Ming Meng, jar juggling; Svetlana Shamsheeva, birds, dog and cats; Picaso Jr., juggler; Yasmine Smart, liberty horses and a Russian group of floor and aerial acrobats.

Cole Bros. Circus opened in De Land, Florida on March 19 under a big top that was forty feet shorter in length than the previous year. Six steel support towers were used, two less than in 2004. The new set up seated 2400. The arena was one large oval. The only animals in the performance were house cats. The show's six ponies were not in the exhibition, but gave rides. Chris Connors was ringmaster and performance director. The performance included Spiderman and the Incredible Hulk; the Yan Dong troupe, pole climbing; Maya Panfilova and Andrey Beloborov, quick change act; George Munteanu, human slinky and Dancing Octopus; Tetyana Synoviyat, cannon act; Yu Xinmeng and Tong Jia, contortions; Kellan, Perollito and Carlos, clowns; the Flying Neves; Maya Panfilova, house cat act; Chinese lion dancers and aerial ladder ballet; Chinese aerial acrobats on bungee; and Andrey and Vicky Medeiros, motorcycle on incline wire.

A thunderstorm hit the show in Ulster, New York on June 6, taking down the marquee and ripping the pony awning. The matinee was cancelled but the night show went on as scheduled.

Cole owner John Pugh donated the September 6 ticket money to the American Red Cross for Hurricane Katrina victims. Adam and Bonnie Hill handled the Cole Bros. elephants Tina and Jewell that were booked on



spot dates. At the end of the season the elephants were back with the circus providing rides in Georgia and Florida.

Pugh was quoted in *Florida Today* on November 8, "Just two days ago, the elephants finished a show in

Albany, Georgia, and I asked trainer Adam Hill to bring them to Titusville.'

"I decided that instead of taking them to winter quarters, we'd bring them on. They started chirping when they recognized the tents,' Pugh said,

In dropping the animal acts, Pugh said the show had simply taken a change in direction. With Marvel Comics' permission, they went with a 'Super-Heroes of the Circus' theme that includes appearances by Spider-Man and The Incredible Hulk.



The inside of the smaller Cole big top in 2005. John Wells photo.

"When you go back to the same places every year, you have to change the show," he said. "But one of the things people have said this year is that they want to see elephants. A lot of people, when they come out for a show and find out there's no animals, ask for their money back. The elephants are really popular, for example on Long Island." Indeed, in 2006, elephants were back on the show.



Inside the Kelly-Miller big top. Paul Gutheil photo.

The Carson & Barnes Circus opened its 69th season in Arlington, Texas on March 25-27. Not uncommon for that time of year, there was a lot of rain, but fortunately the people still came out. The performance opened with a five-ring aerial display with Manuel Luna; Herando, foot loops; Tatiana, golden whirl; Ventura Duo, cradle; Alicia Careres, foot walk; Evgueni Baranok with lions and tigers; Adelson & Gilda and Vincent and Dionicia on space wheels; the Fusco family, gaucho routine; Ginny Frisco, dogs and ponies, and pony drill; Miss Sylvia, big and little hors-

ing; the Riding Loyal Repenskis; Yverson, juggling; Miss Romina, hula hoops; Miss Ashley, hula hoops; Raul, manipulations; the Quina brothers, high wire with seven high; and Joe and Ginny Frisco with elephants. The Cavallini family was missing from the performance after being with the show for 16 years.

The show was without a doubt the classic presentation of the American circus. It had the largest big top on tour, extensive animals and beautifully painted trucks. Around 170 people were with the massive operation.

It toured 18 states, from Texas to Oklahoma, through Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska, east through Iowa, Minnesota and Michigan, south to Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky and Tennessee. The end of the season took the show through Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi where the ravages of hurricanes Katrina and Rita caused some last minute re-routing. Despite

es; the Flying Fernandez; silks by Edwain and Debora; double traps by Karen and Alberto; Cubillos, contortion; the Renato trio, perch pole; Cardenas brothers, hand balanc-

the devastation in some of the southern states, the circus was well received; the fun of circus day a welcome respite for weather-ravished families. The tenting season finished on November 6 in Memphis, followed by an indoor date in Tulsa on November 13. During the year the circus traveled about 15,000 miles on sixty vehicles, 27 of which were large semi-trailers.

The big top was 284 feet long by 150 feet wide. Inside the tent were three large rings and two smaller ones. Kristin Byrd Parra and Barbara Byrd, part-owners, were at home in Hugo for two months during the summer where Kristin delivered her



The Walker Bros. lot in Montrose, Pennsylvania in August. Robert Smith photo.

second son. They returned to the show in late August.

An accident occurred involving a semi-trailer, but fortunately no one was hurt.

Toward the end of the season the show sent two semi-trailers back to Hugo to save fuel costs. The circus played 231 days and had one day off, Halloween. The company had a big day in Lincoln, Illinois on June 14. The matinee performance drew 3500 people and 2200 attended the night show. When the show played

The Carson & Barnes lot in Three Rivers, Michigan, August 17, 2005. Tim Tegge photo.



Maumee, Ohio on September 14 Cole owner John Pugh visited after driving 90 miles from Portage, Michigan where his circus was playing.

Carson & Barnes played two week-ends in the Twin Cities. St. Paul was shown, June 24-26, and Minneapolis on July 1-4. When the show played Millersburg, Ohio on September 20 \$1 from every advance ticket sold was donated to Katrina hurricane victims. The show day and dated Cole Bros. in Tusgaloosa, Alabama on October 25. Carson & Barnes put up wait paper for the date. The 2005 season was the end of an era as the show announced that in 2006 the show would no longer be a five-ring presentation, but have three rings in a smaller big top.



The Alain Zerbini Circus in Columbus, Ohio in July. Fred Pfening photo.

The Kelly-Miller Circus opened in Hugo, Oklahoma on March 19. Kelly and Michelle Rawls were managers. Owner David Rawls remained in Hugo to man the home office. Rawls was appointed Hugo's temporary city manager after the former administrator was fired.

Roy Wells had the elephant rides on the midway and wife Cindy had

Circus Chimera at the Circus Fan's convention in Seattle, Washington. Conrad Rousseau photo.



the camel rides. Justin Loomis was ringmaster. The performance included the Ibarra family, flying trapeze, trampoline and space wheel; Roy and Cindy Wells, camels, horses and llamas and single elephant; Rosales Trio, strap act and perch pole; Claire, clown; Raul Olivares, juggling; Laura Herriott, dogs and pony; and Tavana, single trap.

The show was in Ohio in May and June; Illinois in September; and Missouri in October.

John Walker's Walker Bros. Circus played its usual series of indoor dates during the year's first quarter. The show was in Hutchinson, Minnesota on March 17. The Jose Cole Circus had played the town the day before. Both shows did business.

In most indoor dates Walker used his seven-high bleachers on three sides of the building. Jennifer Walker was ring mistress. In the first act she presented her dogs. Other acts were Kim Sue and Roger, aerial adagio; Jason Walker, juggling and big and little horses;

Lucio, clown; Miss Sashi, pony drill; and Dallas Zoppe, hula hoops.

The Walker tented season opened on June 1. The show was in Arentsville, Pennsylvania on June 5. Dallas Zoppe was ring mistress. The under canvas performance included Jennifer Walker, dogs; Jason Walker, juggling, Lucio, clown; Roger Vallso, comedy trampoline and Louis Del Moral with two Carson & Barnes elephants. The elephants were stranded in Portsmouth, New Hampshire on July 20 when the truck carrying them broke down. Trainer Del Moral said it was like stopping at a rest stop as he took the elephants out to stretch their legs while show quickly sent another truck.

Jim Judkins's Circus Chimera opened its ninth season on February 3. Chimera was a feature of the Circus Fans Association convention on July 14 in Seattle. The performance,

titled Maginystical 2005, included Dmitri Timchenko, hula hoops; Ekaterina Bazarova, contortion; the Chimal Family, casting act; Alex Chimal, juggling; Guennadi Tregoub and Tito Nunez, clowns; Agostini Naltese, space wheel; Irma Usushadez, aerial ballet; Donald and Robert Chimal, motorcycle globe; the Flying Maltese Falcons; Walter, Saul and Michael, silk act; Alex Chimal, tightwire; Ekaterina, Bazarova and Yuri Zagidko, hand to hand acrobatics; Olga Imchinko, quick change; and the Chimal family, Russian swing.

When the show was in Coos Bay, Oregon Agostino Maltese's space wheel rigging failed and jerked to one side while he was in the air. He caught on to the wheel with one hand, and, after holding on for a moment, fell to the ground, cracking three vertebrae and breaking bones in his right ankle and heel. Within two months he was back in the ring.

Alain Zerbini's circus played the Franklin County Fair in Columbus, July 16-23. Mrs. Letty Zerbini was in charge of the show as Alain was in Cleveland with Cal Dupree's circus. The Columbus performance included Miss Melonie, announcer; Damian, unicycle and juggling; Miss Suliana, dog act, blade box and quick change; and the Galerito duo, perch pole.

Robert and Diane Moyer reframed their Bentley Bros. Circus to play fairs. Titled Wombold's Circus Menagerie this midway outfit featured a circus performance with educational content. The circus carried tigers, ligers, two elephants and a dog act. Seating was behind an eighty-foot front. The three-person Russell Bros. Circus played the Orange County California fair in July.

Carnival owners Fred Hollingsworth III and son Fred IV returned to the road to try it again with Holly Bros., Barnes and Bidwell Circus. The 18 truck show had been framed in 2004 using mostly equipment from the failed L. E. Barnes Circus and Roberts Bros. Moving from winter quarters in Arcadia, Florida the 2005 show opened in Port Charlotte, Florida, May 7-8. Immokolee and Sebring followed.

The midway included a ticket trailer, concession trailer, elephant and



Dick Garden's Piccadilly Circus.
Don McGarrvey photo.

pony rides. A new marquee led into the former L. E. Barnes big top. Roy Ordaz was general manager and ring manager. He joined Circus Chimera after Holly's early closing. Martine Espana was lot superintendent.

The performance included the Willy family, high wire; the Espana family, Russian swing, motorcycle on inclined wire, trampoline, rola bola, and aerial acts; and the Kim family, juggling on horseback, liberty horses and big and little horses. The show closed on May 16. It was scheduled to play Eustis, Florida May 17.

Kid ticket issued by Holly Bros., Barnes and Bidwell. Peter Rosa collection.

Richard Garden opened the Piccadilly Circus in Brandon, Florida on February 24, staying four days. Jim Czychel's side show was on the midway. A concession tent was next to the marquee. Some former Holly Bros. seat wagons added seating to the pink and yellow big top. A two pole matching marquee led the way to the big show. A typical Garden marketing effort included wide distribution of free kid's coupons. Senior discount tickets were offered at \$16. Piccadilly moved into Georgia, playing Rome and College Park. The show closed in Sumter, South Carolina on March 15, where most of the equipment was stored.

Following the closing of the Piccadilly Circus in North Carolina, Phil Dolci, an executive on Garden's show, planned to go

to work for Bob Childress' Hendricks Bros. Circus.

As the opening date approached Childress, due the family health reasons, decided not to open the show.

Childress had booked the acts and the route so the circus was ready to hit the

road.

Dolci asked Childress if he would sell the circus to him. He said yes. A contract was drawn up specifying a down payment and a series of payments. The equipment of the show provided security for Childress.

The new owner took possession of the show on April 17 and opened it on April 19 in North Carolina. King Charles Weathersby was 24-hour

man. Michelle Hamid handled the office and ticket sales. Brent De Witt was concession manager. Advance kids coupons were used. Bill Brickle was performance director and presented a dog act. The performance included the Sandro Ramas family, risley, hand balancing, hula hoops and trapeze; Aneliya Angelovam, chiffon act; Javier Nartines family, rola bola, contortion, slack wire; Navey and Sikvia, dance and web.

The circus moved on six trucks, including two seat trailers. A tractor with

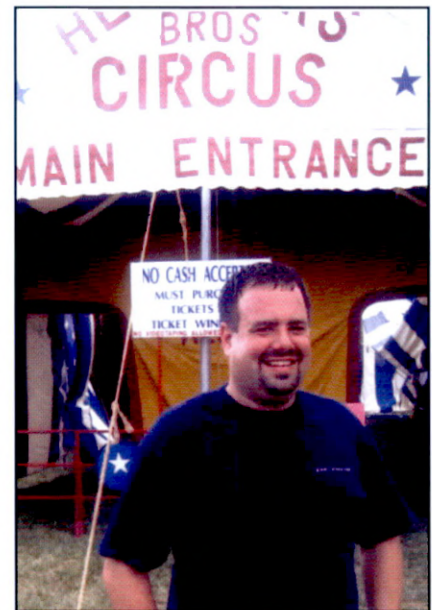
generator pulled a sleeper. The big top was an 80 with a 40-foot and two 20-foot middles. The show played

The Lewis & Clark Circus. Bob Childress photo.



Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana and Tennessee. By July the one-ring circus was in Pennsylvania.

Dolci had a knack for garnering press coverage. On August 30 in Springdale, just outside of Cincinnati, he advised the local police that a monkey, named Dillion and described as having a two foot tail and weighing eight pounds, had escaped from his cage. Sightings began popping up all around the area. It hit television and the newspapers. The story was good for a couple of days until the circus manager



Phil Dolci, owner of Hendricks Bros. Circus. Fred Pfening photo.

advised police the wayward monk had found its way home to the show.

When Hendricks played Bowling Green Kentucky on September 26-27, the minnow met the whale when the show encountered opposition from Cole Bros.

Brian Franzen and his three elephants made a short engagement with the show. The local newspapers commented, "Whether it's a four ton elephant balancing on a ball, jump-roping poodles, a girl who can keep 13-hoops rotating at once, contortionists, clowns or beautiful women twirling from ropes high in the sky, the circus has something for everyone." Big stuff about a small trick.

After selling the Hendricks



Free ticket used by Davenport's Chinese show.

show, Bob Childress framed a new circus. The result was a three truck trick using the Lewis and Clark title in early October. A seven-week fall tour occurred in the Carolinas and Georgia. A foldout marquee that included a ticket office and a concession stand fronted the one ring blue



Bailey Bros. Circus in April. Harry Lea Kingston photo.

and white big top. A camel ride, pony ride, petting zoo, moon bounce and face painting stand were on the midway.

Bill Brickle was announcer and presented a dog act. The performance included Ronnie, goat act; Paul Dresdner, bicycle act and Gaucho act; Princess Jessiam, contortion act; Bob

The Davenport All Star Circus. Bill Curtis photo.



Childress, camel and llama act and big and little horse act; Angelo, rola bola; Sena Franki, wire act; Ronco, magic and telephone gag; and Miss Gladas, single trap act. Interspersed

between the acts were coloring book and peanut pitches and a snake picture opportunity.

John "Gopher" Davenport toured two under-canvas circuses in 2005. One show, titled Bailey Bros., played East Texas in May. His brother Charles (Termite) managed this unit. Charles Davenport, Termite's son, had charge of the moon bounce.

A new yellow and red stripped thirty with a thirty and two twenty-foot middles big top was used. The midway included a moon bounce, snake show, alligator show and concession-ticket wagon. The band was lead by Marshall Eckelman. Acts

included a Russian family and Ervin Hall's dogs.

In the early spring Davenport toured an indoor unit titled The Great Circus of China which played Springfield, Illinois on March 14. Advance advertising flyers for the show said it was the "first appearance in this hemisphere from behind the Great Wall of China."

A Springfield newspaper stated spectators complained that the show lacked any Chinese performers. Instead, the audience reported seeing Caucasian performers wearing black wigs and silk beanies.

A Springfield woman who saw the show reported she recognized some of the performers she had seen with a cir-

cus in Anchorage, Alaska. A circus spokeswoman claimed the circus had ten Chinese acrobats who could not perform that night because of a medical emergency.

The show tried to book the Jasper County Fairgrounds in Newton, Illinois for May 10. After hearing about the Springfield complaints the request was turned down.

Judy Kaye, a spokeswoman for the Chinese show, said the Chinese circus had closed and that the circus that tried to book the Jasper fairgrounds was a different troupe. Gary Johnson, president of the Jasper County Fair, said he had failed to reach the insurance carrier for the circus to verify that the troupe had insurance coverage. Paper work he had received from the circus listed a Venice, Florida, address, and the letterhead from the circus read "Bailey Brothers Circus or Great Circus of China."

The Springfield performance prompted the Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan to file a suit against Frank Walker, Charles Davenport, Judy Kaye and Lavel Martello; the operators of the circus. She said promoters of the so-called Great Circus of China obtained



John "Gopher" Davenport and Charles "Termite" Davenport. Harry Lea Kingston photo.

approval from officials of the Springfield Public Schools to provide free tickets to district students aged 14 and under. According to Madigan's suit, promoters failed to disclose that admission for parents and other circus goers was \$20. She said disgruntled attendees began contacting her office the next day asking about the event. Many who had purchased tickets left during the intermission or



Opening day of the Culpepper & Merriweather Circus. Circus. Harry Lea Kingston photo.

earlier and their requests for refunds were refused by circus representatives who claimed a medical emergency for the absence of Chinese



Circus Valentine in Corpus Christi, Texas in June. Tim Tegge photo.

performers. Madigan's suit sought a permanent injunction and asked the court to void all contracts that were entered into by the defendants. The suit also sought full restitution for consumers, a civil penalty of \$50,000 and an additional \$50,000 per violation. By year's end, this situation was unresolved.



Joe Bauer's Circus Maximus Circus at the Mississippi State Fair in an Alain Zerbini big top. Tim Tegge photo.

The number two canvas show was titled American All Star Circus when it played Ironwood, Michigan, July 24-25. It was advertised as "second largest big top and Barnum's menagerie." Davenport's son Juan

pony rides and a ticket trailer were on the midway.

A straight sleeper truck pulled a trailer with a generator and canvas spool. A van truck pulled the ticket trailer. The seats and poles were carried on a semi-trailer.

The show played Medina, Ohio, August 22-23. The big top contained five-high bleachers. The performance included Rebecca Ostrov, single trapeze; Los Pampas, six-person teeterboard act; two rings of hula hoops; elephant Boo presented by Willard Jacobs; a risley act and the Louis Munoz cannon act, presented outside the tent.

The Culpepper & Merriweather Circus began its 20th year in Oklahoma in March. The six year old blue and white 80 by 120 foot push-pole big top was a little rough with wear. Seating for 800 people was on a nine-high seat wagon and eleven sections of five-high bleachers. Four flood lights on poles around the one ring provided the lighting. Traveling on six trucks the show moved west quickly to California.

A concession-ticket semi was on the midway along with a moon bounce and inflated slide. A large untitled red semi that carried the animals and a petting zoo were also on the midway. A tractor with generator pulled the semi with the big top and a bobcat. Animals on the show included two tigers, one lion, six ponies and six goats.

Early in May it played Soledad, California. Ben Trumble visited the show there and commented, "The

"Chuy" was manager, the three ring red and blue big top provided seating on bleachers. Tommi Liebel's elephant, horse and ponies were on the show. Elephant and

2005 edition of the CM show remains one of the 'family friendly' entertainments under canvas. This year CM added a new cat act under the direction of trainer Casey Cainan, but thus far red tape has kept the cats out of California." In June the show was in Montana and Wyoming, and in July it entered Minnesota. The troupe was in Wisconsin in early August.

Owner Tray Key had a petting zoo, moon walks and a concession-ticket trailer on the midway. The one ring performance included ring mistress Natalie Cainan, who presented an Eskimo dog act; the Arlise troupe (Dykes family), unicycles, web, dogs, single trapeze, doves and aerial cradle; Los Pampus, Gaucho act; Miss Simone, bird act and aerial lyre; Los Bonitas, juggling; Mychelle, hula hoops; and Aaron Rider, unicycle, clowning and bagpipes. In August Casey Cainan was finally able to introduce a cage act with two young tigers and a lion.

Ray "Stick" Valentine's Circus Valentine International appeared under a one ring blue and yellow big top in Burlington, Iowa on June 5. Alfredo Curiel was manager. The acts included a dog display; a motorcycle globe; Amanda Siniga, chiffon act, hair hang and low wire; and Veronica Abadilla, hair hang; clown Tim Tegge; and a motorcycle globe. The show played Fort Madison, Iowa on June 6. Valentine played South

Cornell "Tuffy" Nicholas. Moscow Circus photo.



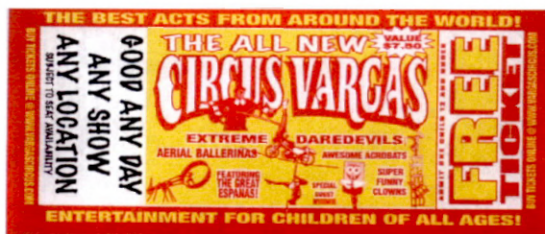


Stars of the Moscow Circus. Moscow photo.

Padre Island near Corpus Christi, Texas on June 25. John Strong, Jr.'s side show was next to the big top.

Joe Bauer's Circus Maximus played the Jackson, Mississippi fair, October 5-16. The performance was presented in Alain Zerbini's European yellow and blue big top.

The Zoppe Family Circus opened the season in Saginaw, Michigan on January 18-23. The show played Navy Pier in Chicago, February 5-6.



Kid ticket for the Nicholas Circus Vargas. Bill Biggerstaff collection.

On July 3 it was in New York City's Little Italy. The Festiva Italiana in Milwaukee was played in late July. Fair dates were played in Union Grove, Wisconsin; Hamburg, New York; Canfield, Ohio; and Guilford, Connecticut. The big top seated about 500. The inside of the tent was decorated by stringers of lights with the Zoppe family crest over the back door. Giovanni Zoppe was with the Hamid show and Circus Flora during the year. The New York Times published an article about the Zoppe circus on August 21.

Cornell "Tuffy" Nicholas again toured an East and a West unit with his Stars of the Moscow State Circus. His formula of wide distribution of children's discount coupons continued to be very successful. A unit was

sent to Hawaii to play the Honolulu War Memorial Gym and Stadium, February 18 to 20.

The Eastern unit played Cincinnati, June 11 and Dayton, June 12. The performance included five girl dancers with hula hoops; Sophia troupe, Russian bar act; Rietta Wallenda, aerial hoop; a comedy acrobatic group; Simon Aristov, rola bola; Coco Kramer, clown; Natalaia and Company, quick change; Arcadia Andronkene, unbalanced ladder; Wallenda Duo, aerial perch; Princess Elaine, contortion; and Sophia troupe, teeterboard act.

The western unit played Los Angeles's Olympic Auditorium on March 5. The performance included Jodie Winn's slide for life;

Amanda Green, hula hoops and web; the five Akishin clowns, rope jump, tumbling and balancing; Svetlana Savinykh, hand balancing; Marika and Elena, quick change;

the Winn's motorcycle on wire and space wheel; the Mongolian Angels, double traps; and Aleksiy Akishin, five chair stack.

Cirque Hawaii poster. Cirque Hawaii photo.

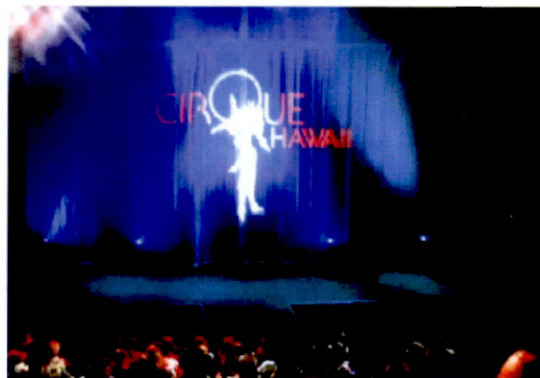
On April 20 the show was in Modesto, followed by Visalia, Seaside, San Jose, Santa Rosa and Stockton. The Cow Palace in San Francisco was played April 30 to May 1. Dallas was shown, May 7 and 8, and Fort Worth, May 9-



Giovanni Zoppe in the Circus Zoppe. Circus Zoppe photo.

10. It was in Las Vegas, June 4-5.

Nicholas leased the Circus Vargas title to play dates where the Vargas show was well known such as a return to the Olympic Auditorium in Los Angeles, October 1-2. The



Inside the Cirque Hawaii theater. Cirque Hawaii photo.



performance included Espanas, motorcycle on a wire and double wheel of death; the Gaucho acrobats; Valey Slonzan, clown; Miss Jemma, contortionist and hand balancer; Mollodova, acrobatics; a Russian quick change act; and the Alexander troupe, balancing beam and casting act, and a double silk act. The show played twelve other California dates from October 7 to November 13.

After achieving great success with the Moscow units Nicholas and his partner Barry Sch-moyer were ready to

make a giant step to open a theater circus in Honolulu. In the fall of 2005 they began making plans to produce Cirque Hawaii. A search of venues led them to a former IMAX Theater on Seaside Avenue on Waikiki Beach. The 478-seat theater required extensive remodeling to allow aerial rigging seventy feet high. All seats in the building were upholstered. Nicholas said a sizeable amount of equipment was shipped from the mainland, including the stage from Minnesota, trusses from Michigan and seat covers from Ohio.

Nicholas and Schmoyer hired experienced creative talent to produce the new show.

Two former Cirque du Soleil employees came on board. Alan Gold, a former wild animal trainer and aquatic director of Soleil's under water show at Bellagio in Las Vegas, was named artistic director and general manager. Mathieu Laplante was the creative director. He had ten years experience performing with Soleil. Vital Germaine was brought in as choreographer. He had performed in Soleil's *Mystere* and *Quidam* productions. Jim Cranos, an executive producer and principal investor in the show, said the company would hire about 30 local people to help with the show and handle concessions.

Cirque Hawaii opened in the newly named Cirque Hawaii Theater on December 19. The seats sold from \$55 to \$130 for a dinner package and VIP seating. The production was more a play with circus acts thrown in than simply a series of acts. The story line took audiences on a journey with the lead character Josephine as she searched the world for the best talent for her circus. Andrey Tuchin played Josephine. A Honolulu newspaper described the production as a "talented and exotic blend of strength, balance, humor, skill, beauty and grace." It also said, "In one awe-inspiring and incredible performance guests witnessed high-energy dance, acrobats, amazing balancing acts along with aerialists, clowns, contortionists, flying trapeze and much more. Staging, lights and special effects were

state of the art, featuring Surrounding Sound, projections, lasers and foggers along with synchronized lighting."

The thirty-two member cast included Andrei Aldoshine, rope jumping; Davassuren Altantsetseg, trapeze; Oksana Andreshkova, Russian bar; Yevgeniya Antsiferova, chiffon Russian silks; Ion Ceacila, bungee; Byambatsetseg Gigengombo, trapeze; Pavel and Karima Natalea, transformation; Gsnchimeg Oyunchimeg, contortion and Valery Serebryakov, Jr., comedian.

The Anasticini Circus played Louisville in May, a week before the Kentucky Derby. The colorful big top was well decorated with flowers with seating at tables. Guests enjoyed food and drink during the performance. All performances were sold out to private groups, and not advertised to the public.

Cavalia, the Canadian horse show, played Scottsdale, Arizona, January 25 to February 20. In the fall it headed east, playing Boston in September. It played the Washington D. C. area at Pentagon City, October 26 to November 15.

Cirque Eloize played Berkeley, California in January. The performance included Stephane Gentilini, juggler; Catherine Girard, aerial hoop; Aimee Hancock, single trap; Jonas Wolverton, aerial Cyr; and Nadine Louis, contortion.

An unusual small French circus came to California from London, England in July. Cirque Lili set up its 250-seat tent in Irvine next to the

Cirque Lili in Irvine, California. Jerry Cash photo.



Barclay Theater on the campus of the University of Southern California for almost the entire month. The boutique red European style big top had wood sidewalls. The tent contained four risers surrounding a revolving stage. Entrance was through an arch title leading to the front door. The performance was built around the famous French juggler Jerome Thomas. When the show played London in 2004 the *Guardian* noted, "Jerome Thomas is a star of the circus world and he never lets us forget it in this 90-minute show of juggling and object manipulation."



Inside the Circus Flora big top. Flora photo.

"He takes on a series of circus ring personas from magician to lion-tamer to clown, while always remaining entirely himself. Two musicians and a flunky, Christopher Pilven, pave the way for each of these appearances as if Thomas were some grand diva, not a circus performer."

Circus Flora opened its 19th season in St. Louis on June 9 and continued through the 26th. The new production was titled *Tzigan*, a Hungarian word for gypsy. The acts included Tino Wallenda's high wire act; Giovanni Zoppe, Nino the clown; the St. Louis Archers; the Flying Pages; the Lazarov Osetian Russian Riders; Katja Schumann's horses. The show played Nantucket, Massachusetts the last weekend in July, arriving there by ferry boat.

Circus Sarasota opened on February 3 using a new European tent owned by Jorge Barreda. Dolly Jacobs and Pedro Reis presented an outstanding performance. The acts



The Royal Hanneford Circus in White Plains, New York. Paul Gutheil photo.

included the Jabali Troupe, six men, tumbling, rope jumping and limbo; Renaldo, clown; Ian Garden Jr., pony act; Shirley Dean, juggling; David



Hanneford at the Altoona, Pennsylvania Shrine. Paul Gutheil photo.

Dimitri, low wire; Yang Dong Wu troupe, Chinese tumbling and hoop jumping; Johnny Peers, dog act; Ricardo Sosa, contortion act; Dolly Jacobs, strap act and the Osetian riders from Russia.

The Royal Hanneford Circus opened the season at the Florida State Fair, January 10 to 21. John Wilson was ringmaster. The acts included the Bilea troupe, a ten person tumbling and teeterboard act; the Markova dogs; the Poema family, Risley act; Susan Ashton, cloud swing; the Yagganset duo, contortion act; the Viorel troupe, horizontal pole balancing; and Nellie Hanneford's liberty act.

On February 21 owners Tommy and Struppi Hanneford brought their circus to the Westchester, New York,

Convention Center in White Plains for the thirty-fifth consecutive year. The acts included Leo Garcia, space wheel and globe; Brian Franzen's tigers and elephants; Valfriy's house cats; Angela Martin's cloud swing; Carlos Swenson's comedy riding; Dulce Aguilar, hairhang; Benito Aguilar, juggler and clown Cesear.

Hanneford produced the Osman Shrine circus in St. Paul, March 31 to April 3. Rebecca Monroe was ring mistress. Acts included the Swenson comedy riding act; Leo Garcia wheel of death and motorcycle globe; the Flying Pages; Les Kimes and his pigs; Gonzales family, rope jumping, Russian swing and dogs; the Vital duo, crossbow act; Smirnof's quick change and perch pole; and Tim Frisco with three Carson & Barnes elephants. Late in April Hanneford units played Dayton, Columbus, and Altoona, Pennsylvania at the same time.

A tented unit opened at Adventureland amusement park in Iowa on May 28. The season closed there on September 25. A tented unit opened on June 23 at the Meadowlands in New Jersey and closed on July 10.

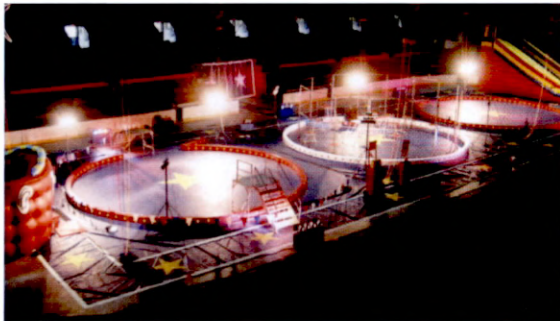
Hanneford again produced the Super Circus at the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, Massachusetts, September 15 to October 1. John Wilson was ringmaster. The performance included Alesia Goukevitch, hula hoops; Mei Ling, hand balancing; Swensons, comedy riding; Andrei Markova, dog act; the Mongolian Angels, aerial acrobatics; and the Great Wallendas, high wire act.

Tragedy struck in Tupelo, Mississippi when Tommy Hanneford suffered a crippling stroke that left him unable to speak and with very limited movement. He was taken by air ambulance to Sarasota where he was admitted to Sarasota's Memorial Hospital. He passed away on December 5.

On December 10 circus priest Father Jerry Hogan conducted a

funeral mass for Hanneford in the Cathedral of the Epiphany in Venice. John Herriott recalled his history with Tommy and recited his beautiful narrative poem, *Old Showman's Heaven*, which now had Tommy sitting in that backyard jack potting with his mom and dad. Mark Karoly then related that his successful career was in large measure because of Tommy. Big E president Wayne McCary defined Tommy as a showman of unrivaled talent who brought to his dates the best show available with distinctive color and style to the absolute delight of the audience. Canadian circus owner and producer Ian Garden expressed his admiration for the skill and flavor that Hanneford brought to the industry. Garden concluded his remarks with a request that the audience give Tommy one more standing ovation. The clapping was long and loud.

At the Manasota Memorial Park in Bradenton, the resting place of many circus greats including Carl Wallenda, Bruno Zacchini, Merle Evans, Doc Henderson and Charles Ringling, Tommy was placed next his mother and father. A military drill team acknowledged his years of military service with a twenty-one-gun salute and a flag presented to Struppi.



The Hamid Circus in Binghamton, New York in May. Tim Tegge photo.

The Hamid Circus Inc. produced the Murat Shrine Circus in Indianapolis, March 3-6. Larry Rothchild was band director and Timothy Tegge was ringmaster. The performance included Yaro and Barbara Hoffman's wild animals; Giovanni Zoppe, Nino the clown; Susan Sheryl's Afghan dogs; Didier Geraldo, low wire and high dive; David Connors, rola bola; Riberia Geraldo, hula hoops; Davide Zoppe's

monkeys and the Jacob-Barreda elephants. Hamid played LaCrosse, Wisconsin, March 11-13.

The Jordan World Circus Eastern unit opened in Flint, Michigan, January 12-17. Scott Emerson was band director, and Billy Barton was performance director.

Kid ticket used by the Jordan show. Bill Biggerstaff collection.

Catherine Hanneford was ring mistress. The performance included Juergen and Judi Neger with the large Hawthorne tiger and lion act; the flying Espanas; Don Otto, comedy diving act; Dieter Galambo, tight wire; Kombe troupe, teeterboard and acrobatics; Cathy Hanneford with the Carden mixed animal act; Mike and Debby Winn, sway poles and space wheel; Svetlan, quick change act; Karoly Ziemán, BMX bike act; Spiderman; Espana's motorcycle on wire; and Galambo Duo, juggling.

Jordan produced the Syrian Shrine circus in Cincinnati, March 10-13. Cathy Hanneford was the singing ring mistress and presented a liberty act. The performance included Vincent Von Duke, wild animal cage act; Michael and Debra Winn, wheel of destiny and sway poles; Don Otto, comedy diving and trampoline; the Flying Cortez; the Iniakinas, quick change; George Carden's mixed animal routine and elephants; Dieter Galumbo, low wire and chair building; Elena, hula hoops; the Kenya acrobats; Karoly Ziemán, BMX bike act; Spiderman.

In April Jody Jordan produced the Ben Ali Shrine Circus at Cal Expo and the rodeo grounds at Folsom, California. The performance was presented in a big top purchased from Kelly-Miller. A flying act was set up outside the tent. Ari Steeples was ringmaster. In May the troupe played Lexington, Kentucky in a big top for the local Shrine. The engagement was a predictable disaster, because of the Kentucky Derby day and dating it.

Jody Jordan produced the Las Vegas Shrine circus, October 1-2. The performance included Vincent Von Duke's lions and tigers; Richardo Espana and Martin Guerrero's two motorcycles on a wire; Brandon duo, roller skating act; Cathy Hanneford, mixed act with two ponies, two zebras and three horses; Sandy Espana and Tonya Stoyanova, chiffons; Martin Guerrero, space wheel; the Flying Espanas, Brett Carden with three elephants and the King Charles basketball troupe.

Circus Gatti opened in San Angelo, Texas on January 21. The show played El Paso, Texas early in March. Gatti produced the Los Angeles Shrine Circus, April 14-17. Brian LaPalme was ringmaster and did a sword box illusion. The acts included Jeff LeCroix, tigers; Acostas, three person high wire act; the Valencias, Gaucho act, strap act, rola bola and bird act; Condorito, clown and break-away bike; Mavericks, globe of death; Shanghai acrobats, rolling globe, lion dances and bungee act; Robert and JoAnn Zinghini, five person perch; John Pelton, three elephants; Mei Ling contortion; Javier, chair stack; Andrea and Geno, platform roller skating on the Kombaruv Russian Cossack Riders. The show was in Watsonville, California in May where its three rings appeared in front of a 1,600-seat grandstand.

George Carden's International Circus played Springfield, Missouri in May. Joseph Dominick Bauer was ringmaster. The performance included Juergen and Judi Neger with the Hawthorne tigers and lions; the Marinoff's single trap act; Larry Carden with Bo the elephant; Dennis Ignatov, dog act; the Golden Statues, six girls from Russia; the Christian troupe, high wire; the Flying Redpaths and the Kombara Cossack Riders.

John McConnell's Circus Royale produced the Utica, New York Shrine Circus,

October 7-9. The performance included the Flying Pages; Julia and Rafaela, hula hoops; Patrick Cashin, clown; Cousin Grumpy's pigs; Jill Pages, and Rafaela, Roman rings; the Jacob-Barreda elephants; Gui Meng, vase juggling; Geraldo's space wheel and motorcycle globe; Bruno Blaszk, tigers and Vladimir's aerial silk act.

During the Utica engagement it was announced that the show had been sold to Les and Rebekah Kimes, who had Cuzin Grumpy's Pork Chop review. The next date for the show was Rochester, Minnesota.

Keith Nelson and Stephanie Monseu's Bindlestiff Family Circus presented its 10th cabaret at the Theater for the New City in New York from February 24 to April 3. The production was titled "From the Gutter to the Glitter: A Night Out with the Bindlestiffs." May 13-16 the show played near Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The festival included artists from all over the world.

In July and August Monseu performed in Atlantic City with Miss Una's Circus by the Sea Motorcycle Thrill act where she drove a motorcycle along a 200-foot-long wire suspended 80-feet above the ground, while Miss Una performed from a trapeze attached to the bike.

In October Keith and Stephanie joined the Midnight Circus in downtown Chicago. During November and December the daring duo entertained onboard the *Explorer of the Seas* cruise ship in the Caribbean.

Tarzan Zerbini opened the season in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Piere Spendle, age 40, was killed by an elephant being loaded in a truck on January 31. Spendle had eighteen

Keith Nelson and Stephanie Monseu. Bindlestiff Circus photo.



years experience in working with elephants. Zerbini again played a string of western Canada Shrine dates under his European big top. Larry Solheim was band director. The performance included Martin's Poodles; Matias, physical feats; Miss Berengere, hula hoops; clown Genia; Patricia Zerbini, elephants; Naidenkin duo, double traps; Erika Zerbini, liberty horses; Poema brothers, trampoline; Ventura, perch pole; Martinez Family, boxing kangaroos; and the Gonzales, Russian swing.

George Hubler's International Circus played Pine Bluff, Arkansas, March 4; Hagerstown, Maryland, April 8; Frostburg, Maryland April 9; Youngstown, Ohio, April 21-23. Hubler produced the Aut Mori Shrine show in Struthers, Ohio, April 1-3. Charlie Van Buskirk was ringmaster. The acts included the Osetian Cossack riders; Alesya Goulevitch, hula hoops; Svetlana, chiffon; the Zee Zany Trio, knock-about act; the flying Tunizianis; and the Carden elephants featuring Bo.

The Holland, Michigan Shrine Circus was played in June. John Fugate was ringmaster. The acts included Shane Hansen, juggling; Tim Tegge, clown; Alecia Hansen, cloud swing; Dazzling Darnels, illusions; Elkins sisters, dog act; the Rolling Diamonds, roller skating; David Zoppe, monkeys; and the Jacob-Barreda elephants.

Hubler played the Great LaPorte, (Indiana) Fair on July 20 for the 25th consecutive year. John Fugate was ringmaster. The strong performance included Julius and Linda Von Uhl, horses and elephant; Jessica & Claudia, double traps and Elkins sisters, dog act. During 2005 Hubler served as secretary-treasurer of the Circus Producers Association.

Circus Pages opened in January in Florida. By April 12 the show was in Greenville, Ohio where it appeared in the National Guard Armory. This circus carried two African elephants; six white tigers and a lion; two camels; dogs and a high school horse. Twelve vehicles moved it. During the summer the show was given outside, enclosed by a sidewall. Usually it appeared in armories.

Jim Earhart was ringmaster. The performance opened with Vincenta Pages's six white tigers and one lion.

She later worked a high school horse and did Roman rings. Other acts were Pauline Pages, aerial routine; Frieda Pages, two camels; Posso Trio, juggling; Pages hand balancing and chair stacking and Jorge Pages with two elephants.



The Pages elephants in an outdoor show. Pages photo.

The Clyde Bros.-Johnson Circus played the Memphis Shrine circus in March. Devon Chandler was ringmaster. The performance included Walter Mercees, high wire; Tammy Wallenda with five tigers; Johnny Peers's dogs; Olieda Cortez, cloud swing; Swensons, comedy riding act; T. J. Howell, juggling and unicycle; Shane Johnson's comedy car; Robinson and Alex Cortez, flying act; Chino, low wire; Tim Frisco's elephants; Flores family, motorcycle globe; and Dave Smith's cannon.

Donnie Johnson, producer of the circus, died on October 30.

Wayne McCary opened his Shrine season on April 9 in Manchester, New Hampshire. Charlie Buskirk was again on hand as ringmaster. Missing, however, was a live band. This year's performance included Nicoletta on aerial rings; Bileas, Russian bar act; Andre Markova, dogs and juggling; the Gulevitch's, comedy cycles; the ten person Bilea troupe, teeterboard act; David Maas and Dania Koseva, quick change; Dania, hula hoops; Fiodar, clown; the Anastasinis, aerial plane with trapeze and the Bill Morris elephants. The route then took the circus to Cumberland, Lewiston, Augusta, Bangor and Presque Isle, Maine.

Ian Jr. and Richard Garden's Garden Bros. Circus, a Canadian outfit, played a number of stands in the

Midwest United States including Cleveland, Toledo and Dayton, Ohio. Some Indiana and Illinois dates were shown early in April with Milwaukee on April 17. The three-ring show was backed by a live band of five men. The strong performance

included a globe act with seven men and motorcycles; Louis Del Moral had three Carson & Barnes elephants on the show. A wide distribution of kids tickets was used in each town.

Serge Corona's Circus Hollywood played the New York state fair in Syracuse, August 25 to September 5 under a big top. The performance included Jolly Pasquale, clown; Miss Crystal, hula hoops; the Mystiquw Duo, aerial act; Stevana Corona, Friesian horses and dog act; Nicole Corona, aerial lyre; the O'Jata, high wire act; the flying Campas and Serge Corona, motorcycle globe. The Marcan tigers, the Rosaire-Zoppe chimps, and the Commerford petting zoo also played the fair.

The largest Shrine Circus in the country is held each fall in Evansville, Indiana, produced by veteran showman Paul Kaye for many years.

The 2005 version opened on November 24 in Roberts Stadium. Tommy Baker and Clem Toca directed a 16-member band. The show opened with a spec titled Circus America on Parade, followed by sixteen single aerial acts, including single trapeze, Roman rings and lyres, featuring Miss Wendelline over the center ring. Wade Burke next presented fourteen Hawthorn white tigers. He was followed by the Vlastek duo and Georges duo, cradle acts; Trudy Strong, Joanne Pinson and Jennifer Walker, dog acts; the Apollos, aerial chiffon; Shane Hansen, Dieter Galambos and the Norbertos, juggling; and Carlos Swenson, comedy horse.

Display ten was an aerial ballet with twelve girls on Spanish webs, seven single trapeze acts that featured Tavana Cary, swinging trapeze

over the center ring. Next came three rings of animals, Jimmy Hall's bears, Derrick Rosaire's bears and the Rosaire-Zoppe chimps. Next came Jeffrey Plunkett's comedy car; Vallas, rola-bola; Vlasteks, unicycles; and Dieter Galambos, chair balancing.

After the intermission came the Flying Redpaths. Display sixteen was the eleven elephants from Carson and Barnes. Joe and Ginny Frisco had five in the center ring; Tim Frisco had three in one end ring and Louis Del Moral had three in the other end ring. The big finish was long mount on the hippodrome track. Display seventeen included the Escola brothers, high wire artists. Next came the Malambo Fusco family's Gaucho act. They were followed by Nicolas and Natalia Winn on sway poles. The finale was the Jordans, motorcycle globe.

Jim Plunkett's James Christy Cole Circus played the Omaha, Nebraska, Shrine Circus, February 24-27. Devon Chandler was ringmaster and John Malett was band director. The performance included David Gamal, juggler; Joe Frisco with five Carson and Barnes elephants; the three Danbinos, comedy act; Olates, dog act; Viorels, Russian bar act; Jeff Plunkett, comedy car; Campas, rolling globes; Billea troupe, teeterboard act; the Tunizianis flying act; and the Cardenas, seven person high wire act.

The Minneapolis-based Jose Cole Circus again played the Upper Midwest. Cole opened in Greenville, Minnesota on March 6. The show was in Sauk Rapids, Minnesota, April 17-18, and Egan, Minnesota, May 25-26.

The performance was given in three inflatable ring curbs in front of a large back drop curtain. Pat Davison served as ringmaster and also did ring tossing and rope jumping displays. The other acts were Jorge Videla, clown; Tom Demry with a Shetland pony, and elephant; Louis Montalvo, metal rod and cube tossing; and the Pat Davison family, unicycle, and hanging perch.

Billy Martin's Cole All Star Circus played its usual route in New York state. Paul Parsons was manager while Martin was busy with the Hanneford show. John Kennedy Kane was ringmaster. The acts included Scott O'Donnell's dog act;

Brett Marshall's BMX bike act; John Kane's illusion act; Kuzneton, strap act; Fletcher Runvan, low wire act; Kuznetons, unsupported ladder act; and Angela Martin, single trap act.

Cindy Migley's Circus Spectacular played Wellington, Kansas on February 13. The acts included Patrick Cashin, clown; the Espanas, Russian swing; the Kenya Wizards, acrobatics; the Hansen's roller skating act; Hansen and Reno, acrobatics; and Brian Franzen's elephants. The show played Waco, Texas, March 19-20. Acts there included the Rolling Diamonds; Adam Hill and the Cole Bros. elephants; Jimmy Hall's bears and Shane Johnson's big cats.



The Star Family Circus. John Wells photo.

Oscar and Kathy Garcia's Star Family Circus played Xenia, Ohio on April 22. Kathy was announcer. Oscar juggled clubs and knives. Dominuto and Minueto clowned. Other acts included Figueva's dogs; Miss Venus, aerial lyre; Zorro, sword balancing; Victor, head balancing trapeze and a motorcycle globe. The circus played the Vermont State Fair at Rutland in September. The performance was presented on a flatbed trailer with a nice looking background.

The Oddfellows Playhouse Circus opened its 2005 edition, called The Macaroni Family Circus, in San Francisco in March. The nine-member troupe presented a 45-minute performance.

Jennifer Miller's Circus Amok played Coney Island, September 3. The show was side walled in Astroland amusement park's parking lot. This year's edition was titled Princess. The performance was a mix of mostly street show and a little bit of circus. The highlights were Miller's

juggling and Jenny Romaine's accordion music.

The Famous Reynolds Circus, based in Mt. Vernon, Illinois, played Shelbyville, Illinois on March 21. The performance included T. J. Howell, juggling; Miss Yoya, hula-hoops; Sebastian, clown; Miss Kathy, foot juggling and Miss Mariel, single trapeze. The circus played the smaller towns in south-central Illinois.

Misha Matorin presented Balagan, a cirque-like show at the Events Center of the New Fantasy Springs Hotel in Indio, California. The show opened on January 14. Balagan, Russian for marketplace, was created in 2003 for the Beau Ravage Hotel and Casino in Biloxi, Mississippi. The acts included a balancing statue act; a two girl chiffon act; a Russian acrobatic wheel act; a cube act; Chinese acrobats; a hula hoop act; lady chair balancing act; a male chiffon act; clown Leonid Leikin; and Roman Tomanov's flying strap act.

The Gamma Phi Circus appeared on the Illinois State University campus in Bloomington, Illinois on April 15-16. Eighty performers presented giant wheel, trapeze, teeterboard, juggling, aerial lyric hoop, Spanish web, tumbling, vaulting, trampoline, unicycles and acro-sports. The five person Runaway Circus season started in California and ended in Tennessee. The group was an outgrowth of the Readlands, California Great Y Circus. The show opened in San Bernardino and then played dates in the San Francisco Bay area.

The Cavallini Productions opened Circus Infiniti in Ardmore, Oklahoma on March 13. It closed after a few indoor stands. The Cavallinis had long been a feature on the Carson & Barnes Circus.

The new Shanghai circus cancelled its appearance in Salem, Oregon on March 12 because of visa problems which were solved by the time the show opened in Branson, Missouri during the summer. The performances were given in a new building. The show had twenty-five acts including contortion, juggling, motorcycle globe, plate spinning, umbrella balancing, and hoop diving.

Dwight Damon presented his 40th Star Spangled Circus at the Deerfield, New Hampshire fair, September 29 to October 2. The performance consisted of Cashew, clown; Shane Hansen, juggling; Espanas, aerial act; Alysia Michelle, cloud swing; Spencer and Lorain, illusions; Merchant and Martini, space wheel; Espanas, Russian swing and Rolling Diamonds, skating act. On December 26 Cirque Dreams opened in Palm Springs, California at the Desert Fashion Plaza. Featured were jugglers, contortionists, a chaffon aerialist, a strong man, a trapeze artist, and tumblers. Circus Fiesta played Ellsworth, Wisconsin on July 6.

Neil Goldberg's Cirque Populaire appeared in Pittsburgh on June 15. The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra provided the music for the show. Gregangelo Herrera's Velocity Circus played San Francisco in May.

George Hanneford ended his 16-year run at Fort Lauderdale's Swap Shop with sixteen performances each week. The program included dancing waters; Spanish web by four young ladies; Catherine Hanneford's mixed act consisting of two camels, two horses and two ponies; Mark Baton's baton twirling; hula hoops by two children; a Russian rag doll act; Belia troupe of ten on teeterboard and Cathy Hanneford with the three Hanneford elephants.

The long-standing relationship between the Hanneford Family Circus and the Swap Shop came to an ugly end on August 12. Without notice Swap Shop owner Preston Henn abruptly kicked the show off his property. Henn's employees slapped hundreds of bright orange "Tow Away" stickers on horse trailers, cars and pickup trucks, threatening to charge the circus \$1000 a day for any vehicles left on the property. They placed boots on other circus vehicles. Henn said he evicted the circus because three weeks earlier it stopped carrying worker's compensation insurance for its employees.

Victoria Hanneford, the matriarch of the circus, said it had performed for free for three weeks.

The Miami *Herald* reported on August 17, "That the Hanneford Family Circus has left town, but they say they're not leaving without a fight.

"The circus filed a breach-of-contract lawsuit against flea-market owner Preston Henn on August 10. The suit alleges Henn owes the Hannefords more than \$25,000 in back pay." The Hannefords moved the equipment and animals to their winter quarters in Myakka City, 20 miles east of Sarasota.

The annual Gibtown circus was given on January 15 in Gibsonton, Florida. Ward Hall was ringmaster, and Chuck Schlarbaun was band director. The acts included the Arlis Troupe, unicycles; Chico the clown; Roy and Cindy Wells' mixed animal act; Jack Cook, clown car; Kim family, equestrian juggling; Molotovs, knife throwing; Cindy Wells, ménage act; Miss Simpson, single traps; Adam and Bonnie Hill with two Cole Bros. elephants; Tina Jewel, two camels; and Miss Ashley, hula hoops. The Walker Bros. big top and seats housed the performance.

Rev. George "Jerry" Hogan, the National Circus Chaplain, provided comfort and personal counseling to dozens of circus folks of all faiths. He shared his ministry with all strata of the circus world from performers to workingmen. He celebrated twelve Baptisms, nine First Communion, two marriages and nine Confirmations on fifteen circuses. Hogan continued his work with the Little Sisters of Jesus who traveled with different shows.

Rev. Jerry Hogan. Jim Gilmore photo.

Father Jerry traveled to twenty cities and celebrated over twenty circus masses and blessed five circuses. His contact with Cirque du Soleil grew as he visited Varekai and Corteo as well as two of their germinating shows in Las Vegas. During the year he traveled 145 days across America, administering sacraments, counseling and continuing to defend the lifestyles of circus people through media opportunities and public presentations. He did two television interviews, two radio shows and four newspaper and magazine interviews.

The Sarasota Ring of Fame hon-

ored four women on January 22, Josephine Berosini, Struppi Hanneford, LaLage and Vicki Unis.

With far more Mexican immigrants in the United States a number of shows from south of the border successfully served this growing market. They advertised in only the Hispanic media, and usually offered a quality show. With no mainstream television or radio coverage these shows generally flew under the radar of the non-Hispanic circus community.

The Circo Fuentes Gasca, which had been in the United States for a couple of years, played Ventura, California starting May 2. The show was owned by Maria Luisa Fuentes Sanchez. The large pink and yellow European big top made a striking appearance. The entrance was through a large colorful front office-ticket semi with flashing lights. This led to a reception tent with concessions. The company, using the Circus Broadway title, played Northridge and Anaheim, California in April and Bakersfield, July 1-4. To change titles, all the show had to do was change the title board on the entrance.

The performance was presented on an elevated ring. Seating was on bleachers with plastic chairs at ringside. The show included a featured clown; Nadia, Roman rings; Miss Fuentes, single trap, Spanish web; Fernando, aerial chifon, hula hoops, juggling, tumbling, break dancing, hand balancing, rola bola; an Arabian Nights spec and a space wheel. There were fourteen acts in the performance, but none with animals. The staff and crew were all dressed in tuxedos. The show played other California dates at Riverside, Palmdale, Los Angeles, and Oceanside in October and November.

In May Circo Hermanos Vazquez played the Anaheim, California Marketplace, a Hispanic area not far from Disneyland. Vasquez was the largest circus playing to Spanish speaking communities across the





Entrance to the Circo Fuentas Gasca. Jerry Cash photo.

United States. While in California Casual Cal Dupree, formerly with UniverSoul, appeared with the troupe.



The Fuentas front using the Circus Broadway title. Fuentes photo.

The show in Anaheim included the Osorios, six in number, with a teeterboard act; Kampanita, clown; the Alberto Cristiani family, trampoline; the Tropical Brazilian Dancers in elaborate Las Vegas style costumes; Carlos Gaona, liberty act with two



Circus Hermanos Vasquez entrance. Vasques photo

camels, two horses and two zebras; the Flying Osorios; Guillermo Vazquez with tigers; Ms. Jeanna, juggler and the Chicago N.T.U. Tumblers.

At the end of November the show played Gaithersburg, Maryland. Dick Arkin visited the show there and commented, "The show is one ring in a European-style big top with high quality seat wagons. The acts are quite good. A tiger act was outstanding." The show played New York City before going to Maryland.

Jamie Garcia's Circo Garcia played Norcross, Georgia from December 24 to January 2, 2006. The European style big top was supported by two

masts and 16 quarter poles. Eight high bleachers and box seat chairs provided the seating. The elevated ring was about five feet above the ground. The acts included Aloe Garcia's space wheel; clowns; Claudia Gugliamo's hand and foot balancing; Chad Garcia's clown trampoline routine; Anita Zeman's Spanish web; Leo and Chad Garcia's motorcycle globe; a Gauchos act; Leo Garcia's strap act; Getti Garcia's hula hoop act; BMX bike act by Korchi Zeman; and Linda Garcia's cannon act.

Garcia played Columbus from July 29 to August 1. In an unusual move the circus returned to the same Columbus shopping center three weeks later after a stand was cancelled due to local problems.

On September 20 the Chicago Tribune reported, "For the last forty-five years, Jamie Garcia has performed in circuses across the continent. Since 1991, he has presided over Garcia Brothers

Circus and, along with his wife and four children, entertained crowds with human cannonballs, trapeze artists and disappearing acts.

"Garcia brought his circus to Cicero last year and

said it was a success, so he expected a return engagement.

"But now the town wants him to disappear, he says. Garcia appeared before the Cicero Town Board last Tuesday, asking for a ten-day run, starting Friday. He said that his Seagoville, Texas-based enterprise brought its 18-performer show to town for the first time last year and that it was a success.

"But board members said Garcia had not given authorities enough notice to properly consider the request, including whether the site could accommodate parking. Besides, they said, the proposed sites for his big-top tent, along Cicero Avenue



Jamie Garcia's Circo Garcia in Columbus, Ohio. Fred Pfening photo.

near 31st and 32nd Streets, are on property owned by Morton High School District 201 and the State of Illinois, respectively.

"After the meeting, he said he still hoped to secure permission from the necessary school officials and bring the circus to town later in October."

Circo Hermanos Caballero played Anaheim, California in February. Running lights brightened the tent at night. The European big top sat around 1200. Ruben Caballero was announcer. The acts included a motorcycle globe; Alex, clown; Natalia, single trap act; Marizka,

Circo Caballero used a typical Mexican entrance. Circo Caballero photo.



hula hoops; Bartolino, clown; Fusco twins, juggling; Albert duo, aerial silk act; Claudia Elizabeth, contortion act; and the Caballero's flying act.

The circus performed only in Spanish but it advertised bilingually on radio and other media, a rarity for Hispanic circuses.

The American Crown Circo Osorio played Henderson, Nevada on March 16. The show was side walled, typical on short stands. Seating was on bleachers. Adult tickets were \$9 and children were admitted free. Roberto Osorio was ringmaster. The acts included Luige, juggling and clown; Karna, hula hoops; Miss Kassandrea, single trap; Oliver duo, double space wheel; Hector, spinning cubes; Silvia, unicycle; Rodogell, rola bola and Clvier Family, Russian swing. Late in the year the show played in North Carolina. The Rodogell's Sky Circus opened in Las Vegas, December 12 to 20.

Many schools provided training in the circus arts. A number of them presented performances. Peru, Indiana's Circus City Festival Circus conducted training in sawdust skills year round. Hundreds of school age Peruvians trained to be part of the ten performances presented from July 16 to 23 in an air-conditioned arena. A number of graduates of this program have had careers in the circus business. Brian Miser and his wife, Ringling-Barnum's twin cannon projectiles, were first exposed to the spangled world in Peru. The annual circus parade marched through downtown Peru on July 23.

San Francisco's School of Circus Arts' Pickle Circus opened a holiday show on December 15 in the Palace of Fine Arts Theater in the Bay City. The performance was titled the High Water Radio Circus. The performance included Liao Heng Juan, ballerina balancing; the Nanjing Acrobats; Gavre and Aidan O'Shea, hoop and tumbling; Simon Chaban, torch juggling; Brett Womack, strap act; Markin and Mooky Comish, clowns. The show was conceived and directed by Aloysia and Rex Camphuis.

On December 16, Robert Hurwitt, the San Francisco *Chronicle's* theater critic, commented on the show, "It's impressive enough when the

ballerina balances on point, on first one shoulder, then the other shoulder of her partner, shifting her elongated stance with, yes—balletic grace. It's breathtaking and beautiful when 17-year-old Liao Heng Juan stands on the toe tip atop the head of her other partner and rotates, full circle, in what appears to be a living, breathing optical illusion.

"Liao, as formidable a contortionist as she is a talented balancer, in one of the highlights of this year's Pickle Circus holiday show.

"A sensually compelling aerial hoop and tumbling routine by Gavre and Aidan O'Shea is another highlight, performed to the smoky crooning of a torch song by Tin Hat's Carla Kihlstedt. Simon Chaban delivers some chilling thrills juggling a torch burning at both ends, and Brett Womack executes cloth-dangling acrobatics at a spine-tingling pace."

The Great All American Youth Circus opened a three-weekend run from May 7 to 22 in the Redlands, California YMCA. The performance was titled Circus Carnavale 2005. The performers, ranging in age from three to 50-something, included twenty-two trapeze artists hanging upside down from a huge aerial apparatus; swinging ladders; unicycles; teeterboard; cradle; juggling and high wire

Sarasota's renamed PAL Sailor Circus opened its spring season on March 23. The production was titled From Broadway to the Midway. The performance was given in its permanent building which sat 1,873. The circus hit its stride under auspices of the Police Athletic League of Sarasota. Nathan Deets was ringmaster. The opening act included giant wheel; ladders; hoops; and webs. Next came rolling globes and Roman rings, followed by adagio and acrobatics. The first half closed with four girls on the high wire, finishing with a three-person pyramid. A strap act opened the second half. Next came a silk act. The flying trapeze closed the show.

The San Diego-based Fern Street Circus opened in Balboa Park, May 20-29. Titled *Through the Looking Glass* it was presented under a big top. The May 28 San Diego *Union-Tribune* noted, "We're of the mind that anything involving contortion-

ists is automatically cool. Fern Street Circus' new production of Lewis Carroll's *'Through the Looking Glass'* features not only contortionists, but acrobats, magicians, clowns and jugglers, making it so cool it's right up there with green Jell-O.

"This production is a mind-bending tour de force that is very special in its own way. When I arrived at the one-ring, open-air tent, I thought that the show was going to be a typical circus that would appeal primarily to little kids. I was in for a big surprise. There was juggling set to heavy-metal rock music, a crazy battle scene between characters out of the poem Jabberwocky, human chess pieces bringing the game to life; and contortionists similar to Cirque du Soleil. I highly recommend that you see this show."

From August 17 to 20 Elsie and Serenity Smith, of Gemini Trapeze, presented a public performance at their Brattleboro, Vermont circus and trapeze space. The performance included duo and solo acts by the twins who had performed with Cirque du Soleil, Ringling-Barnum and the Pickle Family Circus. International Juggling Association champions Tony Duncan and Jennifer Slaw appeared on the program

Circus Smirkus open the season in Brattleboro, Vermont on July 12. The 19th annual summer production was titled Pinocchio. "Smirkus has produced a series of shows based on clas-

Rob Mermin, founder of Circus Smirkus. Circus Smirkus photo.



sic tales, which is why we are known for being a story circus," said Rob Mermin, Smirkus founder. The Pinocchio show combined puppets and live circus action, complete with a whale, and a high-flying Pinocchio under the big top.

Unfortunately, Circus Smirkus collapsed in the fall. The Burlington *Free Press* made the announcement on September 27, "Vermont's most well-known big top has closed up shop—at least for the time being."

"Circus Smirkus, the traveling troupe that grew into Vermont's premier circus organization with a touring group and an after-school academy, has suspended operations at its Essex Circus Smirkus Academy and Greensboro headquarters. Officials at the organization released a statement Monday citing 'operational losses and a lack of cash reserves' as reason for the suspension.

"Rob Mermin, who formed Circus Smirkus in 1987 and serves as its founding director, said in the statement that the organization 'recognizes the impact this suspension will have on children and their families who have been involved in Smirkus throughout the years. We ask for your patience, understanding and support.'

"Circus Smirkus had about 100 employees, 15 of whom worked full time, according to its official Web site.

"The Academy abruptly closed on September 23. Operations within the rest of the Circus Smirkus organization were suspended Monday.

"The business model was set up to support the touring and camps, but when they branched out to the academy, their former method of stealing from Paul to pay Peter didn't work anymore.

"Linda Shier-Schiffer, president of the board of directors, said after a meeting that debt had caught up with the organization. 'Long-term debt and operational losses caught up with us.'

A November 15 Internet report stated, "It's no secret that Circus Smirkus—once Vermont's nimblest nonprofit—has been grounded by a financial crisis. What's still mysterious is the way in which the 18-year-old circus-arts program is accounting for its losses. While the organization

has begun a massive fund raising campaign to raise \$250,000—with an eventual goal of \$750,000—it's been mostly mum on the matter of missing half a million bucks. Disappearing act?

"Barton *Chronicle* reporter Joe Gresser, a veteran arts organizer himself, went to the organization's tax returns for answers. In a recent article, he tracked the red ink to the end of the 2003-touring season, when Circus Smirkus reported a whopping deficit of \$410,000. His investigation precipitated an interview with Smirkus Executive Director Ed LeClair, who blamed the shortfall on a number of factors, including poor ticket sales and an increase in workers' comp costs. Also, Circus Smirkus founder Rob Mermin had been ill for most of the year, and LeClair had only recently started fund raising full-time.



The Circus Smirkus big top. Circus Smirkus photo.

"With its cash reserves depleted, Smirkus borrowed \$250,000 from the Merchants Bank. The next year—2004—generated a small profit, but not enough to make a dent in the debt. The organization decided to go ahead anyway with plans for an after-school program that would provide year-round training for Smirkus—tuition was expected to help the cash flow within the organization. But the Circus Academy never opened in September because the summer tour took a financial tumble. There were logistical problems: The trucks, trailers and cook bus broke down. And programming mistakes: 'We expanded dates in some areas that were jam-packed last year. They didn't get filled like we thought they would,' board member Mark Heyman said.

"LeClair came to the aid of the touring troupers, but in so doing back burned crucial day-to-day fund raising. Meanwhile, two beloved coaches were fired for reasons Heyman won't reveal and—perhaps as a result—enrollment for the Academy came in below expectations.

"Why didn't the board of directors see this coming? Shouldn't the serious fund raising have started two years ago, when the \$250,000 debt was incurred? Did any of the 15 year-round paid Circus Smirkus employees—100 in the summer—fall down on the job? As yet, the organization isn't saying.

"In a recent letter to parents, 'the Smirkus staff' spelled out a three-phase recovery plan. The first quarter-million will go to reimburse academy tuition, pay outstanding invoices and rehire key staff to begin program planning. The next will bring about the resurrection of the Big Top, Smirkus Camp and in-school residency programs. And the third is described as 'a return to full health with sound fiscal policies in place.

"Meanwhile, the simpler 'save the circus' line is apparently working with the general public. Mermin is asking every Vermonter to donate a dollar to the cause. Although he can't say exactly how much they've raised to date, Heyman reports the collection is going well. An anonymous challenge grant of \$125,000 has been motivating. But in a season already marked by donor fatigue, how many more do-or-die disaster drives can succeed?"

The Smirkus board announced that a benefit show would be presented on December 3 at the New England Sports Academy in Westwood, Massachusetts, southwest of Boston. Lo and behold, the overall fund raising was successful. The circus reached its goal of \$250,000 and planned to reopen with a new business plan to help it stay out of debt.

Circus Juventas presented a show in St. Paul from August 4 to 14. This year's production was called *Dymwyh*. It was described as a two hour "magical journey."

There were all kinds of activities at the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota. Circus Celebrity Night was held on January 14 when Jacqueline Zerbini, Pedro Reis and Lee Stevens were honored. On January 29 A Circus Spectacular Family Festival was held featuring Circus Sarasota and Windjammers Unlimited.

Construction on the museum's new Tibbals Learning Center reached a point early in the year that its major donor, Howard Tibbals, began setting up his model 3/4" scale replica of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, called Howard Bros., which occupied 3800 square feet. In addition a number of models built by the late Harold Dunn, and a selection of lithographs and other advertising matter were to be displayed. A visitor's center was also constructed to become the new entrance to the museum. Both buildings opened in January 2006.

Circus World Museum had a terrible year. Attendance continued its downward spiral, and a parade in hometown Baraboo was not the hoped for financial success. As the summer season progressed, the cash flow problems became more severe as a budget shortfall of a half-million dollars was projected.

Museum director Lawrence A. Fisher tendered his resignation on July 21, and staff was cut to the bone. One of the few bright spots was the museum's presentation of a circus at the Wisconsin State Fair in Milwaukee from August 4 to 14.

The Museum grounds suffered a blowdown on August 10, tearing down the big top and trees.

While the museum's survival was touch and go for a while and all kinds of catastrophic rumors swirled around the Internet, by year's end the financial situation improved enough to assure a 2006 season. Ellsworth Brown, head of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, committed his organization's resources to solving CWM's problems, personally taking an active role in fund raising. He also acknowledged that closing the Robert Parkinson Library and Research Center in 2004 was a "major tactical mistake."



The Tibbals Learning Center at the Ringling Museum.

The International Circus Hall of Fame in Peru, Indiana, opened on April 1. Big top performances were presented from July 2 to August 6. Circus greats John Herriott, Trevor Bale, Miles White and Gerard Soules were inducted into the Circus Hall of

San Antonio's Witte Museum exhibited circus material from the Hertzberg collection from July 23 to December 17. Included in the display was original artwork by Strobbridge Litho Company artist, Emil Rothengatter, as well as historic posters and one-of-a-kind costumes, many of which were on loan from the Ringling-Bailey Circus.

On July 6 the Hartford Circus Fire Memorial was unveiled on the site of the fire.

On August 25 Dave Smith was shot out of a cannon across the border from Tijuana, Mexico to the United States. The performance had been approved by the U. S. Border patrol.

Only a few old-time side shows were on the road in 2005. Ken Harck's Brothers Grim side show appeared in Kansas City the week of

The Circus World Museum's blow down. John Goodall photo.



July 25. It later played Sturgis, North Dakota, August 1-14 during the annual Sturgis motorcycle rally. The acts included Zamora, the Torture King; Danielle De Meux, electric act, whips and fire eating; Chewy, Mexican wolf man and Cyclops, one-eyed man.

The Hall and Christ World Wonders side show played the Florida State Fair, February 10-21.

The show was fronted by a 92 foot banner line. The tent was 45 x 90 feet. A 53 foot semi-trailer was framed as a 45 foot stage inside the tent. The regular season opened at the Pennsylvania State Fair near Philadelphia, May 27 to June 5. The route included the Meadowland's fair June 23 to July 10. The Michigan Free Fair in Ionia was shown July 21-30.

The Allentown, Pennsylvania Fair was played August 30 to September 5. The route took the show to a number of large fairs. The season was concluded at the Interstate Fair in Pennscolls, Florida October 20-30.

Jim Czychel's side show was with the short tour of the Piccadilly Circus in the spring. The 4th annual side show gathering was again held in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, September 1-4. A feature on September 3 was the "Big Swallow" in which nine sword swallows performed together, swallowing a total of 53 swords.

Red Stewart of Philadelphia swallowed 25 swords; Natasha Veruschka took 11. Travis Fessler set another personal record by cracking a bull whip 17 consecutive times while swallowing a sword. All participants were members of the Sword Swallowers Association International. During the meeting the Circus Historical Society presented a Candle Light Award to Scott McClelland of Circus Diablo. The award is presented annually to younger members of the business.

Elephants were in the news from one end of the country to the other.



The Hall and Christ World of Wonders side show. Ward Hall collection.

Some circuses, responding to animal rights pressure, did not have elephants. Cole Bros., Big Apple, Zoppe Family Circus; Hendricks Bros., and most of the Mexican shows made do without pachyderms. Circus Chimera, the Stars of the Moscow State Circus and of course Cirque du Soleil did not use any animals.

The on-going drama of John Cuneo's Hawthorn elephants drug on for over a year. Early in the year he agreed to dispose of his 16 elephants in return for being allowed to keep his 84 tigers. Cuneo said he wanted to donate his herd rather than selling it. The question was to whom.



Jim Czychel's side show on the Piccadilly Circus. Peter Rosa photo.

On May 30 Marc Kaufman wrote in the *Washington Post*, "More than two years ago, federal officials concluded that 16 elephants owned by an Illinois circus-animal training business were being mistreated and had to be removed quickly. Facing the possible loss of his license to keep cir-

cus animals, the owner of Hawthorn Corp. formally agreed last year to give up his elephants as soon as a new home could be found.

"Fourteen months after that unprecedented agreement, however, most of the animals remain in an enclosed barn in

rural Illinois, their future still very much undecided. Animal rights activists are outraged by the delay, the circus owner has been fighting the order in an administrative-law court, and the Agriculture Department faces criticism from all sides for its handling of the emotionally charged issue.

"And now it looks as if some of the animals will end up at another facility created by a circus and not—as earlier believed—at an animal sanctuary. The result is an increasingly bitter dispute about the 'Hawthorn herd,' and more generally about how well, or how poorly, the world's largest land animal is being treated in its North American diaspora,

"The current battle is between circus owners, who see the animals as potentially valuable breeding stock, and the Elephant Sanctuary, a 2,700-acre preserve in Hohenwald, Tennessee, that allows generally older and sick female elephants from zoos and circuses to live out their days largely undisturbed by people.

"Hawthorn Corp. and Elephant San-

ctuary officials nearly agreed that all of the elephants except one male would go to Tennessee, but the discussions broke down over issues including when the sanctuary could receive the animals and whether Hawthorn would contribute to their upkeep.

"Eager to have the Hawthorn issue settled, the USDA recently concluded that another circus owner from

Oklahoma was qualified to receive three of the younger female elephants. Hawthorn owner John Cuneo said he would send the animals to Oklahoma as soon as he gets permission in writing, and that he plans to send another young female and a young male there in the near future.

"But the prospect of having mistreated elephants 'freed' from the Hawthorn circus only to have them placed in another facility associated with a circus has inflamed animal rights advocates, and they have begun an aggressive campaign to convince elected officials and the public that all of the animals should go to the verdant fields of Tennessee instead.

"We raised \$2.5 million for a new barn so we could take the Hawthorn elephants,' said Carol Buckley, executive director of the Elephant Sanctuary. 'Now we're told that three or five of them are going somewhere else, and this is just terrible. Elephants are very social, and this herd—after all its been through—very much needs to be kept together,'

"The organization now in line to receive three of the elephants is the Endangered Ark Foundation in Hugo, Oklahoma, which is run by the owners of the Carson & Barnes Circus. The choice is especially troubling to animal rights groups. The circus has been cited for several federal animal welfare violations and was the subject of an undercover sting by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PeTA), which videotaped a company trainer using a bull hook and an electric prod with the elephants in which the group considered an aggressive way.

"But Endangered Ark chief executive Barbara Byrd said her facility is ready and able to care for three or five of the Hawthorn elephants and has every intention of doing so. She said she received a request from Cuneo, the Hawthorn president, more than a year ago to take some of the elephants, and now she has been approved by USDA to receive them.

"Our family has lived with elephants for years and years, and we don't agree to take these three lightly,' she said. 'We love these animals.'

"Byrd said she hopes the three adult elephants will be able to reproduce but she does not know whether

that will be possible. The adults would remain forever at the Hugo facility, she said, but any elephant babies would be trained to join the 'working herd' of the Carson & Barnes Circus.

"The fate of the Hawthorn elephants, ages 25 to 52, is complicated by the fact that two of them tested positive for tuberculosis several years ago, and the others are all at risk as a result. Largely because of the tuberculosis, the animals were not considered appropriate for zoos, and the March 2004 consent decree with Cuneo says that the Hawthorn animals cannot be returned to circus life.

"Nonetheless, Cuneo worked hard to have the elephants placed with other circus owners and not with the Elephant Sanctuary or another similar large animal preserve in California. Both of those organizations have been highly critical of the way that circuses and zoos treat their elephants and are, Cuneo said, associated with animals rights activists whom he dislikes. Still, by November, Cuneo had sent three of the sicker elephants to the Tennessee sanctuary—one of them died of tuberculosis three months after arriving—but then negotiations stalled for the others.

"Arguing that the government was forcing him to send the animals to a sanctuary against his will, Cuneo had earlier sought to overturn the consent decree. An administrative law judge extended the August 2004 moving date for animals and, Cuneo said, suggesting that the government be more open to other destinations. The Endangered Ark Foundation, which Cuneo described as a top elephant breeding facility, was approved earlier this year."

But, other problems arose. By the end of the year only one Hawthorn elephant, Joy, had arrived in Hugo.

Zoos lost elephants during the year, resulting in lots of heat from animal rights groups and the press. The Chicago *Tribune* reported, "On May 1 the third and last elephant in the care of Lincoln Park Zoo was

euthanized after it fell ill en route to a new zoo home in Salt Lake City. The death of the 36-year-old female African elephant Wankie comes amid a long face off over the suitability of housing elephants in zoos.

"On Sunday, Lincoln Park Zoo president Kevin Bell said Wankie's death may bring an end to elephants at the zoo. The zoo plans to transform the area for elephants into a pen for camels.



Animal rights protester at Alain Zerbini's circus in September. Paul Gu-theil photo.

"It is the third elephant for the zoo in the last six months. Wankie was the last surviving member of a trio of female elephants

brought to Lincoln Park Zoo from the San Diego Wild Animal Park in 2003 amid protests from animal rights groups."

A male Asian elephant, Ganesh, on loan from the Cincinnati Zoo died on August 20 at the Columbus Zoo. The seven year-old elephant was found dead in his stall when the keeper arrived at 6:30 a.m. Ganesh was captive born on March 15, 1998 at the Cincinnati Zoo. After becoming more difficult to handle, he was moved to Columbus in April 2003 to the pachyderm exhibit where facilities are more conducive to male elephants. While in Columbus, Ganesh was housed with four other Asian elephants. On May 14 an elephant whose calf died in her womb the previous month died from a uterine infection at Walt Disney World's Animal Kingdom near Orlando.

The never-ending struggle between PeTA and the circus industry continued. On June 26 Chicago *Sun-Times* reporter Andrew Herrmann wrote about PeTA's elephant war in Colorado, "It was a story too cute to resist: A spunky ninth-grader with a 'soft spot for animals' gives up music for a new calling—banning circus animals in Denver.

"She collected 6,000 signatures to get the question on the ballot. She

gets her mom to fill out the referendum paperwork. She's interviewed by out-of-town newspaper reporters and on national TV.

"However, watching from Washington, D. C., officials of the Greatest Show on Earth, failed to see the charm of Heather Herman's crusade. Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey joined the battle of the ballot box, participating in a \$200,000 pro-circus campaign that included direct mail, yard signs and newspaper ads. In the end, Denver voters last summer, by a 2-to-1 margin, sided with the circus.

"Now, the circus is closely watching developments in Chicago, where Mary Ann Smith is set to introduce this week an ordinance that would effectively ban circus elephants in the city. Under Smith's bill, circuses would have to provide each elephant with 10 acres of space—five indoors and five outside.

"Smith has been working with animal rights groups like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, which contends that transporting elephants around the country for months, and the methods trainers use to teach animals tricks, are abusive.

"With Ringling Brothers typically carrying 10 to 12 Asian elephants to Chicago's United Center each November, the proposed ordinance would block the circus from stopping here, said Thomas Albert, vice president, government relations for Feld Entertainment Inc. 'We're not coming without elephants,' he said.

"Chicago is a big commitment to us. We've been coming there almost every year since 1919,' Albert said. 'Combined with two weeks in suburban Rosemont, out of our ten-and-half month touring season, that's a month right there.'

"In Denver, which, like Chicago is a two week stop for Ringling, the circus drew 250,000 people, generating an estimated \$8 million. Albert said surveys of its customers show that its animals are the No.1 attraction.

"PeTA has been lobbying aldermen, and passage, given rejections in other big cities like Seattle, seems unlikely. Still, hearings would provide a forum for both sides. 'It'll be an education for the public,' said PeTA spokeswoman Debbie Laethy.

"Among its complaints about

Ringling Brothers, PeTA notes that an 8-month elephant was euthanized last August after it fractured its legs falling off a circus pedestal, and a young elephant drowned in a pond in Texas in 1999.

"Animal rights groups have succeeded in banning circuses in about 15 communities in the United States, including the California towns of Huntington Beach and Pasadena, and in Boulder, Colorado.

"Typically where there have been bans enacted, they've been in small towns we don't play directly," said Albert.

"Ringling Brothers owns 53 elephants. Twenty-four perform, 22 are at its 200-acre breeding facility, the Center for Elephant Conservation in central Florida, and seven are retired at another Florida location. Albert said.

"Elephants are too valuable to the circus for it to abuse them," said Albert, adding "Our elephants get plenty of exercise."

"In Chicago the elephants are housed behind the United Center in a 164-foot-by 49 foot aluminum barn with a fenced outdoor play area about the same size. They are chained by one foot and one back leg at night, said a circus spokesman."

On October 16 the Virginia Pilot reported on PeTA skullduggery. "The cats and dogs two PeTA employees have been charged with euthanizing and dumping in an Ahoskie garbage bin were killed by injections of pentobarbital, a barbiturate commonly used to put down animals, according to new warrants issued and served on Friday.

"Additionally, the two were charged with three felony counts of obtaining property by false pretenses. The charges allege that they euthanized three cats from an Ahoskie veterinarian after promising to find the animals new homes, according to the new warrants.

"PeTA employees Andrew B. Cook, 24, of Virginia Beach, and Adria J. Hinkle, 27, of Norfolk, were served with warrants on 22 felony charges of small animal cruelty and three felony charges. Both have been released on \$35,000 bail, and PeTA is paying their legal fees. PeTA suspended Hinkle for 90 days and did not discipline Cook."

During the year the sawdust world lost Billy Barton, author, trapeze performer and performance director; Gilbert Fox, horse trainer; Derrick Rosaire, Sr., animal trainer; Tommy Hanneford, performer and producer;

Eduardo "Eddie" Murrillo, performer and producer; Max Schumann, horse trainer and performer; Pierre Spenle, elephant man; and Anna May, elephantine star.

Many people provided information for this review. Paul Gutheil, Jerry Cash, Tim Tegge and Harry Lea Kingston again shared their photographic skills. Other contributors were Pete Adams, Mark Anthony, Clark Beurlen, Bill Biggerstaff, Chuck Burnes, Kristin Byrd Parra, Lee Cavin, Bob Childress, Bill Curtin, Fred Dahlinger, Rich Deptula, Harry Dubsky, Jr., John Goodall, Bob Goldsack, Ward Hall, John Hart, Bill Hall, Paul Holly, Fred Hoffman, Father Jerry Hogan, Paul Horsman, Christina Houghtaling, Paul Ingrassia, Alexis Kaiser, Ed Limbach, Frank Maxwell, Edward Meals, Ernie Miller, Joseph Meyers, William T. Patterson, Verne Mendonca, Jim McGarvey, Dan McGinnis Sr., Pam Moore, Fred D. Pfening III, Bill Rhodes, Peter Rosa, Don Sandman, Robert Smith, Alex Smith, Bob Sugarman, Rod Wainwright, John Wells, Jim Withrow, Buckles Woodcock, and Herbert Ueckert.

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EN ROUTE TO THE GREAT EASTERN

PART ONE

By William L. Slout

Charles H. Day kindled my interest in the Great Eastern Circus while I was compiling and editing his many writings for *Ink From a Circus Press Agent*. An intriguing comment read quite simply, "The circus ship, Great Eastern, was practically launched on wind for lack of capital and sailed to success on a light I.O.U. It was one of the most audacious ventures ever attempted by a management."¹

The show's metaphor was inspired by the British *Great Eastern* steamship, launched in 1858. She was larger than any ship before and for several years after. Its celebrity was established in America in 1860 when it made a record-breaking trip from Liverpool to New York City. As it lay in harbor after the crossing, an entrance fee was charged the curious of the city to go aboard and look around.

Exemplifying its popularity, a huge horse, said to have come from Belgium, was named after the ship and exhibited in Boston. The mammoth equine weighed something like 2,300 pounds, with a girth of nine and a half feet, and stood nearly twenty hands high. Nixon & Kemp's Great Eastern Circus was the first of that title; but operating a year before the ship's debut, the "Eastern" actually referred to the section of the country in which the show performed.

The Great Eastern of our narrative was created in 1872 and continued as such for three years. There have been various observations made to the way it was organized, to its inordinate amount of gift, to its initial successes and ultimate failures, and, particularly to the three people who conceived it and carried it out—very absorbing circus entrepreneurs George W. DeHaven, Andrew Haight and R. E. J. Miles—whose lives were

interwoven in a series of professional ups and downs that make for an interesting chronicle. We begin by reporting the circus activities of these three men prior to the forming of the Great Eastern (hence the *En Route* in the title).

George W. DeHaven was born in Jackson County, Ohio, March 22,

Great Eastern Circus ad used in 1872. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives.

1837. His mother died when he was very young; so when he became twelve years of age his widowed father, Abraham DeHaven, gave him \$200 in gold and told him to shift for himself. His father, then, became the first of many financial backers. With this capital, he purchased a team of oxen and a plow and hired out for farm labor. Later he acquired a threshing machine to work the wheat fields. However, such labor became too menial for a young man

The Only Really Great Zoological Triumph!
A World on Railroad, at an Expense of \$2,000 Daily, which it leaves in Towns where it exhibits. 470 Men and Horses, 1050 Animals, 26 Crimson and Gold Cages. 1872

GREAT EASTERN
MUSEUM, MENAGERIE, AVIARY, CIRCUS & BALLOON SHOW.

AT KEWANEE,

SATURDAY, JULY 6.

MATINEE IN THE AFTERNOON.
A Colossal Exhibition, embracing Rare and Choice Fossils, Zoological, Acrobatic, in the Wonder World, from the tropic climes, and in this era of Oceanic navigation, to be obtained on the entire Globe.

HALF A MILLION DOLLARS IN CASH
Has been expended in completing this Mammoth Enterprise.

THE MONARCH MASTODON OF THE ROAD.
Residing Thirty-five Miles in transport, is from stated to guard. He is accompanied by his experienced conductors, that PETER HARRIS, PA VILLAGE are required to exhibit his combination of Twelve Shows in One; one for the Monarchs, a second for the Museum, a third for the Circus, and a fourth for the Circus, and one price of admission admits the ticket holder on the four parts. A herd of Elephants, 120 Beautiful thoroughbred Horses, in Livery, Spectacular, all World Renowned Performers, a drove of Oxen, 50 tons of Wild Game, 2000 White Horses, and 1000 Mules.

THE ELEPHANT BISMARCK.
Formerly the property of the Viceroy of Egypt, imported to this country expressly for this Great Exhibition, and is introduced to each performance by the world renowned trainer, Robert Ellis. A VILLAGE OF MASTODON CARBON, accompanied by acrobats, is introduced in full uniform dress of Great Indifference. TWO LIONHOUNDS and LITTON OF DUBIN, one with two and the other with one, only three and four men, he will, play in his hands, and as he handles the Indian handle them without fear. A HEAD TITUL, RABBIT ANTELOPE, the only one ever imported in America, and the most difficult of all four tamed animals of Africa to capture. A very splendid CHIEF, King of Alaska, a strong, handsome, and magnificent animal, will perform. The culmination of the Zoological Entertainment is the daring performance of the Intrepid Lion King, Herr JULIAN ZENDEL, with his twenty-four men of Indian Line, California or Uruguay line, Rocky Mountain Black Bear, Long Legged Bear of Alaska, Japanese Lion, East India Lion, Spanish Fallow Deer, Crying or Roaring Elephant, Laughing Hares, Black and Grey Wolves, Headless and Black Tigers, Scimitar Lions, and many other animals, all of which are introduced in the most magnificent manner.

At an Enormous Expense the Champion Leaper of the World, Mr. Geo. M. Kelley.
Madam Agnes Lake, Miss Emma Lake, Mlle Carroll, La Petite Anna Carroll, Mlle Cornelia, Laura and Louise, The Great Carroll Family, W. B. Carroll, Fred Sylvester, F. Milano Brothers Adolph Gonzalez, Jerome Tuttle, Tom, Ashton, "Chill", J. V. Watson, Sam Zanon, James Kasper, Masters George, Eddie and Willie. Four Great Glows—SAM, P. STICKNEY, Jr., F. H. SHAMAN, JOHN WILCOX, and AL. MIAGO.

THE BEAUTIFUL TRAINED ARABIAN HORSES.
Thaled, Alexis, Lone Star, and the Elephant Pony Romeo.

of DeHaven's ambition; so in 1858, from the money he had saved, he bought an interest in a circus.²

DeHaven was a man who would take out any show as often as he could find a backer for it. With this uncanny ability to talk a circus into being, it is claimed he organized and put on the road some thirty-three different outfits during his career. "[He is] a hustler of indomitable perseverance, resourceful and relentless, and if any man can organize a show and run it on wind, he can," agent Charley Pell was quoted. "The most successful of men have been laughed at and derided and George W. DeHaven may be in that class, and to prove to you the faith that is in me, I would engage to him tomorrow and take my chances."³

Agent W. W. Durand's biographical sketch in the 1872 Great Eastern route book, for a circus of which DeHaven was a co-proprietor, is the original source of DeHaven's activities prior to 1860. Unfortunately, some of what is included has proven unreliable; so it must be treated with some skepticism.

Durand described him as a man of splendid presence who, in his prime, was tall, cool, gray-eyed, broad of forehead, of athletic stature, solid and muscular, and with an active step and speech. "Perhaps no other man in the profession has such manifestly excellent qualities to fit him for the position, so responsible, of manager as DeHaven. He has a mysterious command and influence over his army of actors, working men and attaches, that is at once inexplicable and yet effectual. His orders or wishes are ever obeyed, and so quietly, that one would suppose that his men had been trained under the most rigid discipline, which is not the case. He is supreme among his people, and yet one would never suppose it from any word or action of his. DeHaven was by nature intended for a manager, and he does the old Dame credit."

Durand wrote that in 1858 DeHaven "secured the co-operation of the widely-known Oliver Bell, and organized and equipped an excellent arena and equestrian establishment, at Cedarville, Illinois, which was closed at Green Bay, Wisconsin, the fall of that year." We know that Bell was co-proprietor of Satterlee, Bell & Co.'s Great American Circus in 1858. The use of "& Co." in the title suggests that Satterlee and Bell were not the only owners; so it is possible that DeHaven was a silent partner.

GEORGE W. DEHAVEN'S

COMBINATION OF

Circus and Trained Animals

ALDERMAN & LADD,Proprietors.
 GEO. W. DEHAVEN,Manager.
 WILLIAM B. CARROLL,Equestrian Director
 WILLIAM ALDERMAN,Treasurer
 SAMUEL H. JOSEPH,General Agent

As re-fitted, re-arranged, and re-organized for the Spring and Summer tenting season of 1869, have inaugurated their campaign and will appear for

one day only
 AT
JERSEYVILLE
 on
Monday, May 3d, 1869

George DeHaven newspaper ad used in 1869.

However, the company did not perform at either Cedarville or Green Bay that year, as we shall see; and, to make things more confusing, DeHaven's name does not appear in any of the Satterlee & Bell newspaper items we have been able to find. It was not included within an advertisement in the Covington *Journal* of April 24, or the Cincinnati *Daily Enquirer* of May 5, or the Toledo *Blade* of May 17, or the Columbia (Missouri) *Weekly Statesman* of August 13. On the other hand, the fact that DeHaven became a partner of Bell's for the 1860 season implies they had some prior relationship; so let us proceed with the shaky assumption that he was connected in some way with this organization.

R. C. Satterlee had been the manager for Major Brown's Mammoth Colloseum (sic) the previous year and Oliver Bell was the principal rider. Stuart Thayer tells us they purchased the Harry Buckley circus, which Buckley had closed with the intention of retiring from the business.

Bell's professional career dated back to at least 1836, being connected with such early organizations as Frost & Co., Bacon & Derious, and Welch & Bartlett. In his youth, while serving his apprenticeship, he was known as Oliver Bacon, in deference

to his mentor, Charles Bacon. Agent John Dingess once described Bell's principle act as "among the posies of equestrianism." Therefore, from his twenty plus years in the circus business, Bell was able to share his wisdom with DeHaven, then a twenty-one year old novice.

The opening for Satterlee, Bell & Co. occurred on May 3 and 4 at Covington, Kentucky, just across the Ohio River from Cincinnati, where the outfit had been stored. The "array of Star Performers never before equaled" listed in the opening ads consisted of Bell, Thomas Neville, Oliver Worstel, Hiram Marks and Mlle. Louise, riders; John Davenport and Dan Castello, clowns (this is the first reference to Castello we have seen); Charles Morrison, acrobat; I. W. Tucker, contortionist; John Wolfington, juggler; Mlle. Antoinette, ascensionist; and a perch act called the Andalusian Brothers. The performing roster appears to have remained intact at least through mid-August.⁴ E. O. Reed was the bandleader, whose aggregation, the ads proclaimed, would be driven through the streets in a band chariot pulled by 36 horses, two abreast. Mlle. Antoinette was purported to be the only lady to make the ascension on a single wire without a balance pole. "Only Company that Performs Everything on the Bills." The admission price was 50 cents for box seats and 25 cents for the pit.⁵ One can assume that the cheaper ticket was for standing room.

Conditions were bad in the country at this time, in part because of the Panic of 1857, thus ending twelve years of prosperity. This was particularly apparent in the industrial states of the North. A political distraction in Illinois, brought about by the senatorial race between Abraham Lincoln and his Democrat opponent, Stephen A. Douglas, included seven debates in all, out of which came the memorable, "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

A number of circuses went to the barn early. It nearly happened to Satterlee, Bell & Co. at Chicago, where the circus had set up at the Water Works lot on Adams Street for the fourth of July weekend, the 2nd, 3rd, and 5th. However, the proprietors managed to survive and finish the tour, which included stands in Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin and ending in Carrolton, Missouri, some time past mid-September. This terminated the firm

of Satterlee, Bell & Co.

Durand claimed that in the spring of 1859 DeHaven and Bell went out, closing in the fall at "Duwardugiac," Michigan. This is erroneous. Facts show that DeHaven & Bell's outfit closed at Dowagiac, Michigan, in 1860. In 1859, Satterlee went off to manage J. O. Davis & Orlando Crosby's French and American Circus. Oliver Bell joined Hyatt & Co. in Ohio.

Hyatt & Co. was a railroad show—"Wait for the Fast Train! Progressing with the Age! Ahead of the Old Time Exhibitors." Along with Bell, the roster of Frank Hyatt's circus included Frank Stark, John Naylor, Hiram Marks, and Mile. Victorine, riders; George Archer, globe performer; Nat Rogers, rider and gymnast; T. Williams, strong man; Joe Dickson and Tom Osborn, clowns; Ben Gresh and Eli Burke, trapeze performers; and Mile. Josephine on the rope. Heff Bunnell's Military Band provided the music. John Dingess was the agent. As with the previous circus described, admissions were 5 cents for boxes, 25 cents for the pit, and half price for children.⁶

Unfortunately, the company lasted only a week before going broke, perhaps closing in Indianapolis on May 17. Shortly, a new organization was formed there by Nat Rogers and George Archer, known as the Great Railroad Circus. We learn from John Glenroy, who joined, that this outfit was comprised of members of the defunct Hyatt group—Oliver Bell, William Sparks, Gresh & Burke, and Mile. Victorine. Added to them were William Donovan, gymnast, and Lee Powell and Charles Brown, clowns. Glenroy recalled that from the outset the show was in deep trouble, forcing the sheriff to intervene. "On arriving in Indianapolis, I found the whole concern in the hands of the sheriff, and everything in such a fearful condition that no one seemed to know what to do," Glenroy wrote. "The performers were so badly off that the sheriff, as an act of charity, allowed them to give two performances on the fourth of July—one in the afternoon and the other in the evening."⁷

This last chance was moderately successful. It allowed the company to continue operating until July 12, when a man named McCorkle stepped in and took over the reins. He guided the company on a brief tour through Indiana and then into Chicago for a week, where, unfortunately, at the end of the stand he dis-

appeared with whatever cash there was. The stranded actors were saved for a time by a showman-tuned-Chicago-hotel-keeper, Abner Pell, who leased the outfit for a week to perform during the fair season at Freeport, Illinois. The circus equipment was then returned to Chicago where it was sold through the office of the sheriff.⁸



W. W. Durand, DeHaven's contracting agent.

With Satterlee and Bell both gone in 1859, what became of DeHaven? The touring scheme under the Great Union Circus title, which Durand erroneously referred to as beginning at Cedarville, Illinois, and traveling as far north as Green Bay, Wisconsin, occurred in 1860 with Bell and DeHaven possibly acquiring the Satterlee & Bell tent and equipment. But nothing has been found of DeHaven's whereabouts for the circus season of 1859.

As we have noted, DeHaven was teamed with Bell in 1860 in organizing a railroad show under the patriotic title of Great Union Circus. John Glenroy joined at Dubuque, Iowa, in July as a rider. In his book of reminiscences he recalled the performers as being Bell, rider and acrobat; Charlie Brown, clown and acrobat; William Sparks, cannon ball performer; Tom Burgess, clown; Henry Morrast and Fred Spreckel, gymnasts; P. H. Seaman, clown and minstrel; and Annie Seaman, dancer. An advertisement in the Dubuque *Herald* at this time listed Bell, DeHaven, Burgess, Morrast, and Brown. Added were Fred Warner, Samuel Day, Charles Huntington and Mirne. Louise, with no mention of the Seamans.⁹ The Freeport *Bulletin* advertisement in May listed

Bell, Marks, Sparks, Morrast, Burgess, Mlle. Louise, Charles Huntington, the Ellsler Brothers, and Herr Kline.¹⁰ This illustrates how flexible and even unreliable company rosters could be in the course of a season, as performers came and went and as proprietors used names in a somewhat careless manner. Unfortunately, this adds confusion to one's narrative.

By August the following artists were advertised: Bell, Sparks, Brown, Glenroy, Morrast, Burgess, Seaman, Huntington, Herr Kline, Charley Clark, and Fred Warner. We cannot explain Herr Kline, but we do know he was not Herr Andre Kline, the famous tight-rope dancer. A Miss Azlene Allen was also included as a "modest and most charming equestrienne and danseuse." There was a concert or after-show offered after each performance by the New Orleans Serenades for the admission of 20 cents. There was also, what was described as a "Splendid Band Cavalcade," Nye's Excelsior Brass Band, mounted on caparisoned horses, used to ballyhoo streets.¹¹

DeHaven & Co. opened the 1860 tour in Cedarville, Illinois, on the first of May. The show then worked its way north through Iowa and arrived at St. Paul, Minnesota, by steamboat. The June 6 performance there was marred by the collapse of a section of bleachers, resulting in some broken bones. DeHaven reacted to the accident with an explanation in the *Daily Pioneer*: "The proprietors of the Circus wish to state that they are convinced that the accident was occasioned by the rascality of someone interfering with the stands upon which the seats are placed, and that they have made the most liberal offers in behalf of those who were injured through no fault of their own."¹²

The item did not satisfy the victims, who unhesitatingly filed claims for damages. A sheriff's deputy was assigned to accompany the circus out of town to safeguard the physical assets while legal proceedings determined liability. The *Daily Pioneer* reported that the "lawyers and the sheriff stuck to them like chestnut burs."

In leaving, the outfit was loaded onto a boat and moved along the Minnesota as far as Mankato, where the river makes a sharp curve northward, and continued on to Redwood Falls and the Lower Sioux Agency. There the circus performed for an

audience made up chiefly of Indians. The Mankato *Weekly Record* portrayed the occasion with: "DeHaven's circus visited the Lower Sioux Agency last week, and was patronized by crowded houses of delighted Indians. The first exhibition was given the day before payment, and we are told the Indians were willing to trade blankets, guns, and almost any article they possessed for tickets or admission. The tent was crowded, in consequence of which many were denied admission. When anything occurred eliciting their admiration, those on the inside shouted, which was responded to by those on the outside. Many white persons attended the exhibitions merely to witness the actions of the Indians, which, we are told, were more novel and interesting than the feats of the performers."¹³

The boat and its party made their way back again to St. Paul, exhibiting there on June 29 and 30. A benefit performance was presented on the latter date. "DeHaven's Circus Company proposes to give a grand exhibit this afternoon, June 3th, commencing at 2 o'clock for the benefit of Miss Lillie Collins, one of parties injured by the falling of the seats at one of the performances recently in this city. The Proprietors assure us that every effort will be made to give general satisfaction."¹⁴

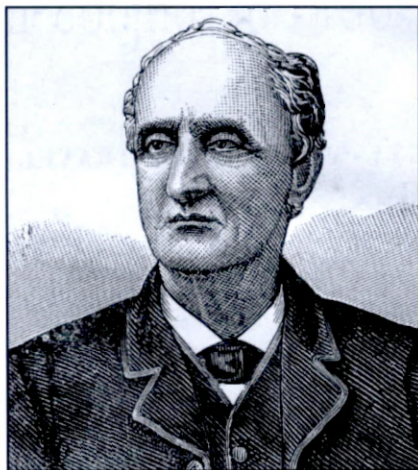
The company had moved into Iowa by July. During a performance at Dubuque on the 12th, Bell's act of jumping through a hoop surrounded by a dozen knives ran into trouble. For whatever reason, his classic leap went awry and he was impaled by the sharp objects. He quickly tended to his wounds, remounted and performed the leap again to success. One of the novelties of DeHaven's program was an equestrian act called "Mother Goose, or, The Man Who Lost His Wife." It is an old subject, a *Clipper* correspondent confirmed, "but, nevertheless, with new handling, may prove very entertaining."¹⁵

Not entertaining enough apparently, for the money ran out in late July at Lena, Illinois, forcing the show to lay over until a backer could be found. Glenroy wrote, "At the end of two weeks from the time I joined DeHaven (he was wrong on the timing), he ran short of funds, and we were forced to remain in Lena until cash came to the treasury.¹⁶ And, indeed, it did, from a man by the name of Sam Weaver (Glenroy erroneously called him Sam Matthews).

At this time rail travel was abandoned for touring the country towns until October 5, when again the treasury was depleted and the company was forced to fold at Dowagiac, Michigan. Poor Weaver lost his shirt and the outfit was attached by the sheriff for the back pay owed the performers.¹⁷ This was just one of many DeHaven ventures that would go aground.

It must be that Sam Weaver had more than one shirt, however, because he opened an interim circus at Freeport, Illinois, within a structure he created for such performances. Items in the Freeport *Bulletin* during the tenure of the winter circus do not include DeHaven's name. Only Weaver was referred to as being in charge of the company.

The Freeport *Bulletin* recorded the winter circus activities almost weekly. The troupe was welcomed by the paper on December 20 with: "The time for amusements has come, and with it the Union Circus arrived. A grand opening will take place on Christmas day, afternoon at 2 o'clock, and evening at 7 o'clock, at the new building just erected for the purpose, near the Ohio House, on Exchange Street. Some of the best performers in the United States have been engaged. Tickets 25 cents." A riding school for ladies and children was also announced, to be held in the circus structure with Oliver Bell serving as riding master.



John Glenroy, DeHaven rider and author.

We learn from Glenroy, who was with the company, there were two performances a week, Saturday afternoons and evenings. The performers were to receive board, lodging and washing, a small amount of

money for necessities, and one clear benefit during the season. The corps consisted of about a half-dozen of the summer troupe and a few others including clown and rider and double-somersaulter Henry Gardner, also known as old Buck Gardner, who, as the New York *Clipper* phrased it, had "bid adieu to old 'Bourbon county'" and was himself again.

The Christmas opening must have been a present wrapped in ribbons for most or all of the troupe, for presumably they had been out of a job since the unfortunate August closure. Add to this the reception accorded them in a *Bulletin* item of the 27th: "The gathering was large and the performance was good—better than anything of the kind that has been in Freeport for a long time. Mr. Oliver Bell accomplished some feats that we thought was not in the power of any actor to do."

The next performances, equally crowded and equally successful, were presented on New Years Day, according to the *Bulletin* of January 3. "The company is now thoroughly organized, and is equal to anything of the kind that has ever exhibited in Freeport. The performers can't be excelled anywhere. If men in other occupations would fill their posts as well as the actors in the Union Circus do, there would be less cause for complaint, and much more good would be accomplished." The paper was generous in its admiration of Oliver Bell: "Mr. Bell performs a feat that we have never seen done by any other equestrian. He leaps from a horse under full speed, through a hoop surrounded by steel daggers, several inches long, and very sharp. The act is a frightful one, and requires a skillful performer."

The troupe having no female rider, one was invented in John Glenroy. This was inspired by the notoriety that had been created the previous January at Niblo's Garden in New York City when Omar Kingsley, under the billing of Ella Zoyara, donned female garb nightly in a ruse that fooled everyone but the New York press; yet not before many in the male section of the theatre had sent the boy bouquets and tender notes and other expressions of adoration. Glenroy was billed as the French equestrienne, Mlle. Reine. The masquerade apparently worked in rural Illinois, with no one but company members aware of it. Glenroy claimed it was a nightly occurrence

for him to receive flowers and love notes from admiring males, and for the young bucks to hang about the dressing room door in hopes of an introduction to the "French beauty."¹⁸

The January 9 performance was a benefit for the sufferers in Kansas, which amounted to eighty-two dollars. The *Bulletin* of January 17 offered a "thank you" to the equestrian troupe and the Union Comet Band for their generous services. "If the church, the temperance society, and benevolent enterprises generally, receive aid without asking its donors in what way they made their money, we cannot see why the sufferers in Kansas may not do the same."

On February 7 the public was informed of a "grand performance" for the following Saturday which introduced a new piece, a play appealing to the spirit of the times entitled *Secession*, or, *The South Carolina Army on a War Footing*. And the *Bulletin* notice added: "... which of itself will be well worth the price of admission." Indeed, seeing a military extravaganza enacted by this small band of equestrians with an even smaller budget must have been quite an experience for the locals.

The actors benefits began toward the end of February. Oliver Bell's, on the 23rd, included a foot race for a silver goblet. The distance was set at one-quarter of a mile, or eleven laps around the ring. "Those wishing to compete for this prize can leave their names with Mr. Smith, at Prescott's Saloon." In addition, there was a race for \$50 between performers Tom Burgess and Buck Gardner.

Mr. and Mrs. P. H. Seaman were next on March 2. The announcement read: "On this occasion more fun novelties, dances, speeches, songs, &c., will be produced than ever before offered at any performances." Among these was a play, *Peter Hontz Family*, in which Seaman used six different voices. Another piece was called *Moze and Lize*. In the same issue of the *Bulletin* it was noted that Madame Seaman was giving dancing lessons at the Keystone Ball Room. "Any person wishing to take lessons in this healthy exercise will call there soon."

The *Bulletin* follow-up on the benefit stated: "The performance was the most amusing given this season. Seaman always performs well, but he excelled himself on this occasion. Mrs. S., a perfect character in all she

undertakes, received great applause. She never looked or performed better. The house was well filled, and most have yielded a very profitable benefit."

Hiram Marks was recognized on March 9. At this performance a pig with a greased tail was tossed into the arena, with a challenge that any boy who could carry it away by the tail could have it. "There is fun in the bill, and it is no use to have the blues when you can get rid of them for a quarter." For Tom Burgess' benefit on March 23 there was a balloon ascension before the program. It was scheduled for 7:00 p.m. in the circus yard. "Everybody is invited to witness the ascension, whether they visit the Circus or not."



George Washington DeHaven.
Author's collection.

On what was to be the final two performances of the season, Saturday, March 30, proprietor Samuel Weaver received a complimentary benefit from the entire company. An outstanding feature for this event was the well-traveled Campbell Minstrels, appearing "in their songs, dances, burlesques, &c." The *Bulletin* added: "Mr. Weaver requests us to return his sincere thanks to the citizens of Freeport and surrounding country, who have lent him their liberal support the past winter."

But there is more. In a final gesture of appreciation: "Mr. Weaver, the proprietor of the Union Circus, having tendered to the company the free use of the horses and building, they propose to give another performance

tomorrow (Friday) evening, which is positively to be the last of the season." With this, the winter stand closed on the 5th of April, after which the company departed for a summer tour with the Great Union Circus.

The clown, Pete Conklin, has written that he was on the *Floating Palace* showing in New Orleans in 1861 when the Confederates seized the boat and ordered all northern people to leave the South. The performers organized a company under the commonwealth plan, chartered a small steamboat, and "fought and showed" their way up the river, finding it necessary to exhibit under two flags. While making stands along the route from New Orleans to Cincinnati, the circus ran up the Stars and Stripes and the band played *Yankee Doodle* for towns on one side of the river and flew the Palmetto Flag and played *Dixie* for towns on the other side."¹⁹ The pertinence of his recollection is that the company was called Dan Castello's Great Show, George H. DeHaven, manager. Unfortunately, it is the sole source of reference to the existence of this circus; and, as we are all aware, reminiscences are often unreliable.

We know that DeHaven was out with his Great Union Circus into August of 1860, but apparently was not a part of the Freeport winter circus that followed. DeHaven's company started again in the spring of 1861, presumably on May 18, only a month after Fort Sumter was fired upon. Going down river at the outset of hostilities to manage the commonwealth company and working his way back up again for the May opening creates a mystifying time span. The confiscation of the *Floating Palace* by Southern authorities has drawn occasional attention from circus historians; but no one has been able come up with a proper source in determining with certainty the date during which it occurred or the circumstances surrounding it.

Let us assume Pete Conklin's recollections are correct. In December of 1860 Spalding and Rogers, proprietors of the *Floating Palace*, leased the tow boat, *James Raymond*, to Dan Rice for his tour upriver to Wisconsin, leaving the *Floating Palace* powerless. When Spalding and Rogers finished a summer tour using their other boat, *Banjo*, they established a winter season in New

York at the Old Bowery beginning on November 5, 1860. Dan Castello, recently returned from England, was a member of the company. After the run faded at the end of January, some of the performers were sent to New Orleans to begin a season on the *Floating Palace*. Dan Castello was one of them. Meanwhile, the Campbell's Minstrels, including Pete Conklin, also joined the *Palace* roster. That would put the two men at the site in early 1861, at a time when DeHaven was available to join them. Louisiana seceded from the Union on January 26, which solidified the already winds of resentment against all Northerners. It is quite possible that some time following this change of authority the boat was confiscated and the troupe was run off. Another boat was chartered and the commonwealth company was formed.

For the 1861 summer tour of the Great Union, Andrews & Carpenter were the proprietors. DeHaven was the manager, Bell the equestrian director, and Hiram Marks the ringmaster. The agents were D. H. Straight and George R. Bates. The plan was to travel to places along the Illinois Railroad line. Advertising took advantage of northern patriotism with a claim of possessing "the most thoroughly bred Anglo-Saxon horses in the world . . . not old, worn out, fancy-marked horses of foreign blood, but they are young, fireish, and of pure American stock." It also made use of a more familiar circus name with the claim that the show was a continuation of the late Buckley & Mabie's Great National Circus.

William Sparks was back, as was Hank Gardner, "the regular 'Old Spotty' Merriman, the oldest Clown now living." Add Tom Burgess, the Holland family, Robert Lindley, and Herr von Driesden (an unfamiliar name and may have been an imaginative addition by the ad writer). Music was supplied by Glinn's Silver Bugle Band. For all this the company charged 25 cents to sit in any part of the tent—"all box and no pit," meaning no standing room. DeHaven still did not carry a street procession, although there is reference to a band chariot pulled by ten horses that daily serenaded the townspeople. An ad sarcastically claimed it was "built in the present century, and has never been used by Nero, or any of the ancient heroes."

Because the war was heating up, the circus was confined to the safer northern states, Kansas and Mis-



Clown Pete Conklin performed for DeHaven.

souri, where the slavery issue was being violently contested, were out of the question. Show people were moving out of dangerous locales at a rapid pace and those stuck behind faced a troubling fate. A letter from a performer in Kansas, read, "How long we may stay here is very uncertain; for it is certain we may be at any moment attacked by Missouri rebels. The man who comes out west now is a lunatic. . . . When I shall be able to get away without risking my life, God only knows."²⁰

The show was in Wisconsin and Minnesota for much of the summer tour. It left Wisconsin after a July 7 date in LaCrosse for a number of Minnesota towns. We learn from the *Rochester City Post*, in regard to a July 10 visit, that the circus carried forty horses and fifty people (this may well have been an exaggeration), including Oliver Bell, the Holland family, Hiram Marks, William Sparks, Madame August, Bob Lindley and Master John. Buck Gardner and Tom Burgess were also mentioned in advertising. The bandwagon pulled by ten horses transported Prof. A. B. Glinn and his bugle band around the streets to announce the show's arrival.²¹

Performances at Stillwater on the

19th prompted the *Messenger* to respond with: "DeHaven's Circus exhibited in this city on Friday afternoon and evening to very fair business. . . . Some of the performers were good--some indifferent--others decidedly cheap. It cost only a quarter, however, and perhaps the crowd got the worth of their money." Thanks to that 25 cent admission, which caused the country people to flock in, the summer business was doing better than expected. R. Sands' circus was in the area at this time, charging 50 cents.²²

The Great Union Circus arrived at St. Paul for performances on Saturday and Monday, July 20 and 22. An advertisement at this time in the *Pioneer and Democrat* reminded the public that the organization was the former "H. Buckley & Mabie's Great National Circus"--two shows combined. The management offered a \$1,000 challenge to any company in the country that could compete with its band or its performance (Has any rival company ever accepted this kind of financial invitation?) Oliver Bell leaped through his hoop of steel daggers; William Sparks caught his cannon balls; John Holland juggled his two sons about in what has come to be known as a Risley act; Herr von Driesden, a person totally unfamiliar to us, contorted; Johnny Holland juggled balls, cups, knives and was a youthful balancer on the globe; Master Georgie Holland participated in a two-horse feat with Hiram Marks, called the "Greek Slave," apparently a carrying act; Robert Lindley sang comic songs; and clowns Tom Burgess and Buck Gardner did their part to enliven the program. Others listed in the ads were Charley West, E. F. Demming, Lyman Snytchen, Abe Fanekan, Old Kilsey, Joe Brown, La Petite Harmon, Madame Augusta, and "the world renowned drum major," Isaac La Rue, all of whom are "un-renowned" to this writer. The public was cautioned that it would be their last chance to hear Glinn's Silver Bugle Band, since they were to be "joining forces under the 'Glorious Stars and Stripes.'"

Andrews & Carpenter were listed as proprietors, DeHaven as manager, Bell as equestrian director, Marks as master of the arena, and George R. Bates as general agent.²³ The St. Paul appearances prompted the *Pioneer and Democrat* to report large audiences, with no one leaving the tent dissatisfied. After dates at St.

Anthony and Minneapolis, the show returned on the 25th, at which time one of the performances was devoted to the benefit of the Minnesota's First Regiment.

The Great Union was in Wisconsin in August, and then may have finished the season in Illinois. W. W. Durand wrote that dissension arose among the partners "regarding route, conduct of show, etc.," which forced the circus to close at Lena. We have found no evidence to confirm this. However, we learn from Robert Loeffler that at season's end DeHaven went indoors for a winter run at St. Paul, first in a building called the Athenaeum, with a performance on October 31. The next exhibition, for some reason, did not occur until November 20, from which the *Pioneer* and *Democrat* expressed pleasure the following day. "The burlesque opera is the best we have seen in the city. The gymnastic exhibitions are fully as good as any of the Circus exhibitions."²⁴

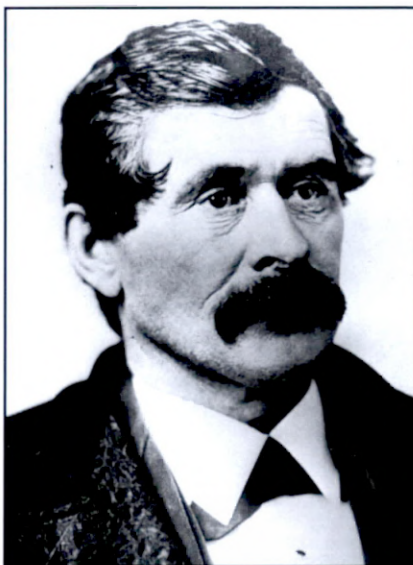
In December, the company moved to another site. DeHaven had "leased and fitted up at considerable expense, a spacious stone building on Seventh Street, near the International Hotel, as an amphitheatre, and proposes to make it a permanent place of amusement." An advertisement promised performances for each Wednesday and Saturday evenings. An item for December 28 announced that "additional performers of notoriety" had arrived and that the farces *Loan of a Lover* (vaudeville by J. R. Planchet) and *Cobbler's Frolic* (pantomime, author unknown) were being presented. The press prefaced a performance on New Year's night with a suggestion that everyone should dress warmly and followed the next day with: "Notwithstanding the difficulties attending the performance on New Year night, we have heard universal satisfaction."²⁵ Activity continued at this site into February.

DeHaven left winter quarters with a much stronger cast of notable performers for the 1862 season. This included Louise and Theodore Tourniaire, Burnell Runnells, William Worrell, George Batcheller and William Dutton. DeHaven was listed as proprietor; Samuel Weaver, the money man, was treasurer; Robert Johnson, the ringmaster; John Free, band leader; and Charles F. Lord, agent.²⁶ Again, the show traveled chiefly in Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois. Advertisements audaciously

boasted of the best riders, superior tumblers, three clowns, and three equestriennes, "and in fact the greatest combination of talented and salaried performers ever congregated under one pavilion."²⁷ In Iowa the Independence *Civilian* announced the show's arrival with: "The troupe will perform on the 20 inst.; and judging by notices in our State exchanges, we have no hesitancy in saying that the best of satisfaction will be given to those who attend."²⁸

The large, expensive roster was too much to handle for a 25 cent company. DeHaven was forced to reorganize at St. Louis in mid-August with a major turn-over of personnel, removing the highest on the salary list. A September ad carried the names of Hiram Marks, Dan Castello, Joseph Tinkham, Carlo, W. J. Smith, the Holland family, the Conrad brothers and Robert Johnson.²⁹ Gone were the Tourniaires, Runnells, Worrell, Batcheller, and Dutton.

The change does not seem to have diminished audience appeal. Well, seemingly not. The Quincy, Illinois, *Daily Herald*, hailed the one-day stand with: "The performances of DeHaven's Circus in this city on Saturday afternoon and night added to the reputation the company had already acquired as the best that has visited the West for several years. . . .



Dan Castello, circus owner.

DeHaven's Circus is not only no humbug, but it is in reality far superior to all that is claimed for it." The paper expressed appreciation for the company's policy of giving ten percent of the receipts for the benefit of sick and wounded soldiers.³⁰

The troupe moved by boat along the rivers, performing in Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois, until the Great Union Circus reportedly folded in October at Polo, Illinois, an event that probably lost Sam Weaver his final shirt.

Castello ventured into circus proprietorship for the first time in 1863. With Matthew VanVleck, he put together a wagon show out of Fairplay, Wisconsin--Castello & VanVleck's Mammoth Circus. Richard VanVolkenburg was the manager; Tom Poland, master of the arena; and J. R. Murphy and L. VanVleck were ahead of the show. Castello's trick horse, Monitor, and his educated bull, Don Juan, were featured.³¹

After opening in Dubuque, the tour took the circus through territory in Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota. In a return to Iowa in September, a late arrival at Keokuk necessitated the canceling of the matinee. The *Daily Gate City* reported that the performances were well attended and applauded their entertainment value. "The Wonderful educated horse, Monitor, manifested a wonderful degree of intelligence, seeming to understand every command and motion of his master. The trained bull, Don Juan, was a new feature in the ring performance and performed excellently."³² Glenroy was with the show, riding both his somersault and two-horse act. He recalled this being one of the most successful tours he had ever had.

In October the company, which had been traveling by boat along the Ohio River, announced plans to reorganize in St. Louis for a tour of the South. This resulted in changing owners, the new ones being Matthew VanVleck, Ben Maginley and George W. DeHaven.

Maginley, soon to become a familiar figure in this narrative, was a roly-poly actor who had performed in the major theatres of his time. At the start of the war he was stage manager and low comedian with the Memphis theatre company. Very popular with local audiences, he took a farewell benefit on July 28. However, earlier in the month he had launched his own circus company, which first performed in Illinois towns and then returned to Memphis and into a newly erected wooden amphitheatre suitable for performances of horse dramas. This thirty-one year old robust actor, weighing some 240 pounds, entered the arena as a clown

for the first time on August 17.

Maginley's company opened in Memphis on August 8 to a most friendly reception, as expressed by the *Daily Bulletin*. "Mr. B. R. Maginley, the indomitable, has got up a new attraction, in the shape of a circus, which is at present all the go, and we can't see why it should not be, for if anything can be made to succeed, Maginley can make it. 'Many thousands got in, and yet there were many thousands who tried and couldn't,' as we heard a disappointed gentleman say, who tried, but couldn't."³³

It was this organization that combined with the VanVleck and DeHaven people to travel as Maginley & VanVleck's Cosmopolitan Circus, with DeHaven assuming the management. At this point Glenroy, still carrying resentment from the 1860 DeHaven debacle, turned in his notice. "I left," he wrote, "as I did not wish to travel in any company that DeHaven was interested in."³⁴ Dan Castello departed more diplomatically, "returning home to break horses for the next summer."

The first engagement of the new management team was in St. Louis beginning October 7. The circus played to good business, which prompted an announcement to remain for another week. The route ultimately led back to Memphis for October 29 through 31. It was then consolidated with Maginley's Cosmopolitan Circus for a winter season in the Memphis wooden amphitheatre.

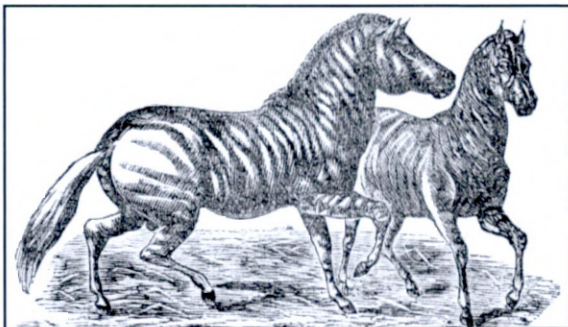
Somewhere along the route, DeHaven disappeared, but the circus remained active. At mid-December the *Clipper* announced that "Maginley & VanVleck's Circus [continued] to hold forth at Memphis together with Henry Cooke's troupe of Trained Dogs and Monkeys, and [was] playing to crowded houses."³⁵

We learn from Durand that in 1864 DeHaven went out in connection with Dan Castello's Great American Circus. The names of Moore and Gruber were mentioned, probably as the backers. A *Clipper* item listed the title of the company as "DeHaven & Castello."³⁶ Yet, DeHaven did not serve as manager; that position was filled by Levi J. North, and later by L. B. Lent. At different times the general agent was Gil Eaton and Abner

Pell. So, this leaves DeHaven's connection with the Castello circus a mystery.

Castello started from St. Paul with a May 9-11 stand. Then, traveling on the *Jeannette Roberts*, the show went down the Mississippi, stopping at such places as Hastings, Minnesota; LaCrosse, Wisconsin; McGregor, Dubuque, Davenport, and Keokuk, Iowa, and Cairo, Illinois. He then moved up the Ohio River to Shawneetown, still in Illinois; New Albany, Indiana and Louisville, Kentucky; then up the Wabash to Vincennes and Terre Haute, Indiana; ending at Chicago in early September. The following month the show was back down the Mississippi and into the White and Arkansas Rivers before connecting with the 17th Corps at Little Rock, under the command of General Steele. This is suggested by a Syracuse *Standard* interview: "In 1864

Mr. Castello organized a circus



An illustration from a Great Eastern Circus newspaper ad.

of his own and started south, and was the first to cross the line of war." It stated he had 12 horses and enough good performers to make out the company. The troupe followed the Seventeenth Corps, which was under Steele's command at Little Rock, and gave shows in the camp. Helena, Ball's Bluffs, Pine Bluffs, Vicksburg and other places were visited, and by war's end, Castello was with the troops at Randallville. He then pushed on to Nashville, spent the summer in Tennessee and wintered in Kentucky.³⁷

The tour was not without danger. The performers had a scare while at Commerce, Missouri. After playing to a good house in the afternoon, there came rumors of rebel guerrillas in the area. With the evening house well filled, the rumors were confirmed by the sight of three rockets being fired into the air from different locations around the town, which cre-

ated a panic within the troupe. The program was conducted with dispatch, the tent was taken down in record time, and the entire troupe boarded onto their boat, which steamed up the river as fast as the old boilers would allow.³⁸

Durand stated that DeHaven ended up in Memphis. This stand opened on October 3, with plans for a week's stay. "Dan Castello's mammoth tent was again crowded to excess last evening by the admirers of quaint, original humor, ground and lofty tumbling, feats of strength and daring, fine horses, splendid horseman ship, and the tinsel and glitter of 'the equestrian ring,'" so read the *Memphis Daily Bulletin* of October 6.

The visit was expanded through Saturday the 15th because of the large turnouts. The *Bulletin* of the 9th revealed: "By general request and induced by the flattering patronage extended by our citizens, Mr. Dan

Castello has concluded to remain in Memphis a few days longer, with his mammoth show. New features will be introduced at each performance, and those who have visited his tent, as well as those who have not, will find an entirely new and interesting programme."

A group of citizens encouraged a benefit for Castello. In an item to the *Daily Bulletin* of the 12th, the invitation read: "A number of your friends and admirers, have, with pleasure, witnessed your plan of conducting an Equestrian Establishment, both in the departments of business and art, [and] feel it incumbent upon them to tender to you some mark of open appreciation. A complimentary benefit and celebration, in which all your well-wishers can participate, has been proposed, to be observed at any time best adapted to your convenience." This was signed by a number of prominent people of Memphis. Such a message leaves no doubt as to who was the proprietor of the circus.

The performance, which occurred on the 14th, appears to have been a success, according to the *Bulletin* of the 15th: "The marquee of Dan Castello was crowded to its utmost capacity last evening by his numerous friends and admirers, and the popular *beneficiare*, at the close of the entertainment found himself the recipient of a very flattering testimonial of the public's appreciation of the prince of humorists."

NOTES

1. Charles H. Day, "Happy Days at

the St. Charles," *Billboard*, November 5, 1904. This item was included in *Ink From a Circus Press Agent*. (San Bernardino, CA) The Borgo Press, 1995.

2. W. W. Durand, *Great Eastern Route Book*, 1872.

3. John M. Henderson, "Winning Wealth with Wind," *Billboard*, September 7, 1907.

4. Advertisements in Covington (KY) *Journal*, April 24, 1858; Cincinnati (OH) *Daily Enquirer*, May 5, 1858; Chicago (IL) *Tribune*, July 2, 1858; Columbia (MO) *Weekly Statesman*, August 13, 1858.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Richmond (IN) *Palladium*, May 5, 1859.

7. John H. Glenroy, *Ins and Outs of Circus Life*, pp. 116-118.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Dubuque (IA) *Herald*, July 11, 1860.

10. Freeport (IL) *Bulletin*, May 3, 1860.

11. Aurora (IL) *Beacon*, August 16, 1860.

12. Robert J. Loeffler, "Visits of George Washington De Haven and his Circus to St. Paul, Minnesota and Beyond." *White Tops*, May-June 2002. Part 1, p. 28, quoting the St. Paul (MN) *Pioneer and Democrat*, June 9, 1860.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 29, quoting the Mankato *Weekly Record*, June 26, 1860.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 29, quoting the St. Paul (MN) *Pioneer and Democrat*, June

30, 1860.

15. *New York Clipper*, September 1, 1860.

16. Glenroy, p. 119.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

19. Pete Conklin, *Barnum & Bailey Route Book*, 1906.

20. *New York Clipper*, October 26, 1861.

21. Loeffler, Part 2, p. 27, *White Tops*, July-August 2002, quoting the Rochester (MN) *City Post*, July 10, 1861.

22. Loeffler, Part 2, p. 28.

23. Advertisement, St. Paul (MN) *Pioneer and Democrat*, July 19, 1861.

24. Loeffler, Part 2, p. 29, quoting the St. Paul (MN) *Pioneer and Democrat*, December 19, 1861.

25. *Ibid.*, *Pioneer and Democrat*, January 2, 1862.

26. St. Louis (MO) *Republican*, August 18, 1862. Others listed were Henry North, Kate Bailey, Jennie Day, Laurie Hazen, Julia Fitzgerald, P. H. Seaman, Master Charles Seaman, Sam Rinehart, Carr & Burdeau, Gustave Wagstay, John Wilson, and Mons. Fraker.

27. McGregor (IA) *North Iowa Times*, July 15, 1862.

28. Independence (IA) *Civilian*, July 15, 1862.

29. Newspaper ad book, Circus World Museum, for Keokuk (IA), September 17 and 18.

30. Quincy (IL) *Daily Herald*, September 15, 1862.

31. Among the company were

William Smith, two-horse rider; John Glenroy, somersault rider; Joseph Tinkham, hurdle rider; Charles Burrows, Richard Hammon, John Bums, and George M. Kelley, acrobats; Natt McCollum, banjoist and Ethiopian entertainer; and Frances Castello (probably Mrs. Dan Castello), rider. Castello and Tom Burgess were the clowns. Glenroy, p. 130.

32. Keokuk (IA) *Daily Gate City*, September 21, 1863.

33. Memphis (TN) *Daily Bulletin*, August 11, 1863.

34. Glenroy, p. 132.

35. *New York Clipper*, December 19, 1863. To complete his move into the world of the circus, Ben Maginley married Marie Carroll, adopted daughter of two-horse rider W. B. "Barney" Carroll and equestrienne Mary Ann Carroll, at Memphis early in 1864.

36. Durand, *Great Eastern Route Book* 1872; *New York Clipper*, March 26, 1864. Loeffler, Part 4, quoted the St. Paul (MN) *Pioneer and Democrat*, March 31, 1864, as being the Castello and DeHaven circus. It may be that DeHaven's name was used at this time because of his popularity in the St Paul area.

37. Clipping, Syracuse (NY) *Standard*, 1899. *Jeannette Roberts*, under Capt. F. Aymond, 111 tons, ran the St. Paul, Minnesota River, earliest date is 1857, dismantled in 1870.

38. *New York Clipper*, July 16, 1864.

Bill Kasiska's Letterheads

The Walter L. Main Circus flourished from the mid-1880s until 1904 when Main, still a young man of 42, sold his company to circus broker William P. Hall. Erie Lithograph printed this sheet for the 1898 season. Note Main's claim of investing \$2,500,000 in the show.

Bill Woodcock's Circus Album

This is breakfast in the making when we were on the Cole show in 1946. The smiling man at the back of the griddle is George Davis, cook-house superintendent. He was called "Laughing George." Unlike someone such as Frank "Cheerful" Gardner, whose nickname was just the opposite of his true character, Davis laughed a lot. The Cole cookhouse was not a cafeteria affair; a waiter brought your food to your table and you sat at the same table every day. The staff ate together, department heads together, performers together and so forth.

It was customary to tip the waiter and he supplied extras like peanut butter etc. In fact you tipped a lot of people, the man who filled your water buckets on the lot and if you tipped the train porter you found your shoes polished when you got up in the morning.

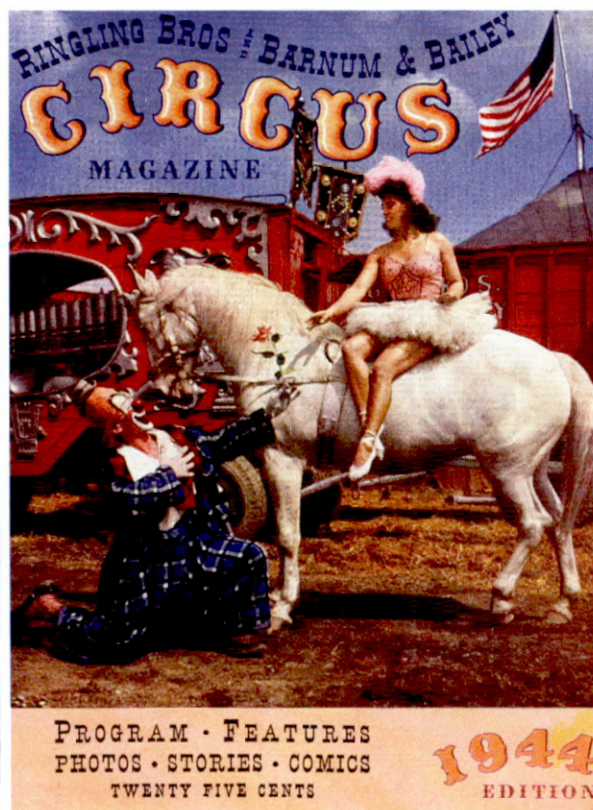
D. R. Miller told me that his family's Kelly-Miller Circus bought Army surplus knives, forks and even metal trays for their cookhouse. He said after the last meal of the day they would scrape the remains off the trays and then toss them into a tub of



water then sprinkle some soap over the top. The truck en route to the next stand would serve as an automatic dish washer as the tub bounced around, and when they reached the next lot the trays and silverware were spread out on the grass to dry.

I was a candy butcher on the Robbins Bros. Circus in 1949, working for Frank

Ellis and Laura Anderson, Bud Anderson's widow, and I remember that Jimmy Devine would shave in the vat that he later cooked the





candy apple syrup in. We had the only candy apples in show business with whiskers.

This is the Busby Bros. Circus bill car in Carbondale, Illinois in 1909. I think this was a 3-car show. I never have had much interest in shows that didn't carry elephants, but I must admit, how could anyone not attend a show that was honorably advertised and conducted, and faithfully fulfilled every promise?

Next we have the 1944 Ringling-Barnum program cover with Lou Jacobs presenting Ernestine Clarke with a flower. I miss Ernie and Parley Baer, her husband, a lot. I have many fond memories of the times spent at their home when we were with the Polack show in the

1960s. Parley was probably the greatest storyteller I ever knew.

Once I asked Ernestine about her days as a feature with the Ringling show and to my surprise she said that it was sort of a fluke. Robert Ringling had been friends with her family for years and to her astonishment she

not only got a job, but Mr. and Mrs. Ringling took her under their wing, gave her a stateroom on the train, and a feature spot in the show. This, of course, caused considerable "saber rattling" amongst the Old Guard (a subject I will not dwell upon).

The finishing touch came when she discovered that she had a private dressing tent. She said she was quite miserable for a while until she made friends with Neets Deisler who she talked into sharing the tent with her.

One July afternoon while she and Neets were in their dressing tent, she said, the show had started and the cat acts were on (at this point she said to me, "Buckles, you know how boring those Alfred Court cat acts were.") when suddenly they heard a large reaction from the audience. Neets said, "Don't tell me Court is getting a hand," then they heard screams and panic. Ernie said that their first thought was that a cat had escaped so they stepped up on their trunks and looked over the side wall just in time to see the flame coming over the tent. They were, of course, in Hartford, Connecticut in 1944.

Ernie said the show sat on the lot for a week or so and the circus personnel were advised against going down town. A circus fan would take messages to Western Union so the people could inform friends and relatives of their safety. She was anxious to get word to her mother and was standing in line behind Karl Wallenda. She said she heard the circus fan say to Karl, "Who do you

wish to contact?" Karl replied, "Frank Wirth," who was a booking agent and husband of May Wirth. "And the message?" "Show burned up, need job."

This is highly regarded elephant trainer Chris Zeitz with the Great Floto show in 1905 with the elephant Mom. He started out with Ringling at the turn of the century and by 1904 was working an act. Zeitz was with the Floto show through 1909 and put some great acts together, most notably with the big male Synder who in later years would walk down the track on his hind legs with a lady balancing on one foreleg.

Zeitz was with Norris & Rowe in 1910 and with Danny Robinson in 1911. He finished out his career with Mugivan and Bowers shows, Howes Great London, 1912-1915; John Robinson, 1916-1922; and retired from the circus business after the 1923 season with Sells-Floto. He died at age 77 in Kissimmee, Florida on January 5, 1953.

Our last image is of Spot Griffin, the baggage stock superintendent on Sparks Circus in 1931. This is the way a Boss Hostler should look.

Marvin L. Jones 1928-2006

CHS member Marvin Jones died on April 4, 2006 in his adopted hometown of San Diego, California. He was 77. He was the world's leading authority on wild animals in captivity--when and where they were exhibited and for how long. A native of Philadelphia, he worked as a keeper at the zoo there when a teenager. He was a career Army enlisted man and used his various postings to visit zoos around the world and to research their old animal records. He discovered new information about famous animals. For example, during a 1982 trip to France, he gained access to the archives of the Jardin des Plantes in Paris. There he found that the later mighty African elephant Jumbo did not arrive there as a calf in 1861, as most of the literature has it, but two years later in 1863. After leaving the service, he served as registrar of the San Diego zoo and retired there. He held the title of its Registrar Emeritus until his death. --Richard Reynolds.



Side Lights On The Circus Business

PART FORTY FOUR

By David W. Watt

Editor's note. The dates listed are the dates the article appeared in the Janesville, Wisconsin Daily Gazette.

March 1, 1919

While I am telling you of the trials and troubles of the big circuses in the early days, there is one more town that I want to mention, and while our troubles there were not of a serious nature, I got my warning letter from the advance agent to be sure to give more than their contract called for and if they did not ask for too much, his advice was for us to settle.

So the first thing I did in the morning was to go to the city hall and pay the license which called for a free city parade and police protection during the day. But in the face of all this, the parade had only reached the principal four corners of the town when the chief of police stopped the parade and demanded \$25 more for the license for the reason, he said, that the wagons were much heavier than our advance agent had reported they were and that on account of the damage they would do to the streets, we would have to pay \$25 extra before the parade could move on. This we did and nothing happened until the opening of the show in the afternoon.

This town, by the way, was Fremont, Ohio. If the reader will go back a few years, you will remember that Rutherford B. Hayes of Fremont, Ohio, was elected president. While on his retirement from the White House, he did not have a record like that of George Washington or Abraham Lincoln, yet I have always felt that he was the best man in Fremont.

The lot where we showed belonged to the ex-president a few yards away from his beautiful residence and

inside the city limits.

The chief of police was very officious all day long, and when I opened the big wagon in the afternoon to the large crowd, he stood about 100 feet back from the wagon. The second I raised the ticket door, he raised his official dub high in the air and said, "Young man, if I catch you passing out any counterfeit money or short-changing anyone in Fremont today, I will arrest you." Before I commenced selling tickets I said to the chief, "You seem bound to arrest someone with the circus today, and my advice to you is if you must put someone belonging to the circus under arrest, pick out some man that is not as busy as I am, for I am the busiest man around the show and would absolutely refuse to go with you if you did arrest me." Then I went to work selling the tickets to the big afternoon house. All the afternoon,

A typical big show ticket seller, this one on Sells-Floto in 1915. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives.



while paying the hotel bill feeding-men, etc., the chief was always on guard around the wagon, but no trouble of any kind came until later.

Late that night when one of the big wagons was leaving the grounds, one of the larger ones ran against a city oil lamp post and broke it down. While we wanted to pay for the lamp post, no one seemed to know how much to charge. One of the officials stated that it would have to be replaced in a short time anyway because it was decayed and the damage did not amount to much.

About 1 o'clock that night, after everything was loaded, all the three sections of the show and the trains almost ready to pull out, the chief of police came to Mr. Forepaugh's car and demanded \$45 for the broken post. The original cost when new, all complete, was only \$4.85, but there was nothing to do at this late hour but settle. Mr. Forepaugh took his own time and paid the overbearing chief of police \$45. This took place down in the railroad yards. Mr. Forepaugh said to the chief: "I should think you would be afraid to come down here at 1 o'clock at night alone for this money." But the chief said that he was not afraid of anybody; that he always had his club and a six-shooter on his hip and that the toughs of the town all knew that he was ready to use them in case it was necessary at all times.

It was probably 30 minutes or more before the different sections pulled out to the next town and the papers of Fremont came out the next day and said that the chief of police

had been roughly handled that night. The toughs took all the money he had in his possession, his watch and chain and even an overgrown gold star which he carried on his breast. The assailants were unknown, but they were probably some of the toughs that had been watching him all evening--maybe, I don't know. I did hear later that the overgrown gold star was only plated. It is fair to say that the city had to stand for the loss of the lamp post for which it could have received an amount exceeding three or four times its value, if it had been asked for in the right way.

The average reader may think after reading of the troubles we had in different towns that it was always like this, but that is not so. It is fair to say that 99 percent were sunshine and the people were always glad to have us come and hundreds would be down to watch us unload and load up until the last wagon left the grounds, and then, waving their hats and handkerchiefs, bid us farewell, hundreds yelling at the top of their voices, "Come again!"

The men who were at the West Baden Hospital at Christmas, 1918, will not soon forget their Christmas party here. Among the big men of the immediate neighborhood are the Ballard brothers, Edward and Norman, head of the Hagenbeck circus company. The winter quarters of this circus are on the hills overlooking French Lick Springs.

The hospital's chief architectural feature is a vast interior rotunda, 200 feet in diameter and 200 feet in height, roofed by a small dome that is reported to be only a bare second in size to St. Peter's in Rome. Row on row of rooms with hanging balconies look down into this central space from floor to dome. The balcony balustrades are fringed with thick pendent ferns. It's really a most effective piece of building.

Into this amphitheater the Ballard brothers brought their performing horses and dogs, their trained lions and tigers and their wise old trick elephants. They had to get them up a steep flight of stone steps to the front doors, and it was no easy

business to squeeze the elephants through these same front doors. Trumpeting their protests, they crouched and sidled through. Once inside, the troupe went through a full performance, clowns cracking jokes, women bareback riders poising on their prancing nags, the Bengal tiger clinging to the ambling elephant's neck, roaring lions crouching at the crack of the ringmaster's whip, while from every window and balcony the wounded soldiers hung, whistling and shouting their enjoyment of the novel spectacle. No maharajah of India at an imperial durbar could have given a more royal show.

A visit to the winter quarters of the menagerie is one of the features of life to the visitors at French Lick Springs. If the day be warm and sunny and you're in good luck, you'll find the old elephant keeper a lean, soft-voice, mild-mannered little gray man sitting outside the elephants home and he'll take you in to see his pets--eight gray, swaying massive forms.

A rusty old iron stove heats the place and facing the well-moored huge beasts in separate pens are a water buffalo, a couple of ostriches, a deer and a sacred cow. At the further end a languid, world-weary hippopotamus dreams of life on the White Nile, while on the opposite side of the way some sad-eyed monkeys pursue their endless search. Nearby in another long building a number of sleepy African lions, Bengal tigers and other felines look singularly innocuous--almost kindly.

However, a rusty training cage of slender bars which you pass through at the entrance rather gives you the

shivers as the mild and amiable guide keeps repeating: "They're all right if you don't let them get about your head. If they do get there, your done for. They'll jump on you, sure as fate."

He'd been thirty years in the animal training business and his father before him was for over sixty years a trainer of wild beasts. Think of it--nearly a century training lions, tigers, elephants, et. al. for the semi-savage joy of the multitude! No wonder there was an atmosphere of patient remoteness about my friend, the keeper of the elephants!

March 8, 1919

The one big event of the year for the outdoor showmen was the fifth annual banquet and ball of the Showmen's League of America which has come and gone and will be known in history as the greatest event of its kind ever staged by the outdoor showmen. It was in every way a grand success, both socially and financially, as it brought together showmen from practically all quarters of the globe. It was held in the Gold Room of the Congress Hotel. Many of the representatives of the league were there, from New York and San Francisco, also, a large number from San Antonio, Texas.

Promptly at 7:30 the guests were assembled in the banquet hall and Toastmaster Teumann welcomed them and bade them all have a good time. After the demitasse had been served and the waiters had retired, the toastmaster introduced the newly elected president of the Showmen's League of America, Edward C. Talbott. In a masterly speech Mr. Talbott gave a brief resume of the league's history from

its inception five years before until the present time, paying a glowing tribute in the course of his talk to the memory and works of the late president, John B. Warren. At the close of his remarks the members of the organization presented him with a bouquet of American Beauty roses.

The honorable A. O. Eberhart, ex-governor of Minnesota, was next intro-

The West Baden Hotel and Casino.



duced and his dry humor and anecdotes soon had everyone wiping tears of mirth from their eyes. His subject was "The Showmen's Service to Humanity," and he told of the wonderful opportunity granted to every show, from the biggest circus to the littlest wagon show, to carry glad tidings of good cheer to the hundred million men, women and children throughout the country. But he emphasized the fact that these shows must all be clean--so clean that the preacher and the deacon and their wives and children will not be ashamed to come to the lot and the big top. The governor made a spontaneous hit and was applauded to the echo.

Harry F. McGarvey was then introduced. Mr. McGarvey represents the New York Club No. 2 of the Showmen's League of America. He spoke of the work being done by the New York club and its hopes and aspirations for the future.

Andrew B. Sharon, substituting for James A. Davis, spoke entertainingly and instructively on "Thrift and National Reconstruction."

Then came Will Rogers of the Follies who, as the toastmaster remarked, needed no introduction. Will was working true to form and soon had his hearers rocking in their seats and holding their sides. He literally stopped the show and had to respond to an encore. Following the speaking, the big hall was cleared and promptly at 10 p.m. President and Mrs. Edward C. Talbott and Mrs. Nat Reiss, chairwoman of the Women's Auxiliary, escorted by Harry Melville, led the grand march that opened that part of the program for which enthusiasts of the light fantastic had been eagerly awaiting. From then on until the early hours, it was an ever-shifting, laughing, happy throng of dancers in the ballroom, while the more staid and sedate members of the profession held receptions in the annex.

One of the special features that made a hit was the dancing of Harry and Gladys' Earles [Doll?], the world-famous midgets, who have been a feature attraction with Ringling brothers. The music for both the banquet and ball was furnished by Henshel's orchestra under the personal direction of James G. Henshel.



Will Rogers in his vaudeville days.

No affair ever given by the league was more highly praised than the fifth annual ball and banquet, and the executive committee and the various assisting committees all deserve a full measure of praise.

Pawnee Bill was Buffalo Bill's last partner, and when they showed in Janesville a few years ago, Colonel Lillie (Pawnee Bill) was the financial

The Sells-Floto Circus winter quarters in Denver, Colorado.

backer and manager of the show. But after the failure of the show a year or two later in Denver, Major Lillie retired from the business and devoted all of his time to his banking business and his oil fields. He has made more out of oil in the last eight months than he made in the Wild West game in all his long career. He is now rated a millionaire twice over.

Charles D. Dillingham has a plan to carry entertainment to returning soldiers detained at various points in the harbor. A huge lighter is to be transformed into a stage and circus ring and on this floating hippodrome various features of the regular hippodrome show will be presented.

The work of transforming the lighter into a theater is now in progress. The barge will meet incoming transports during the mornings and on Sundays it will be towed to the different stations where the troops are quartered.

March 15, 1919

Although it is a little early to know much about the large tent shows as to when and where they will open, a letter from the Sells-Floto show at Denver gives their opening date and in a general way the course that they will take early in the season.

Sells-Floto is as fine a show for the size as ever took to the road and has left a good reputation practically all over the west. This season it will give the eastern people the chance to see



one of the finest street parades and best arranged performances that was ever given by a show of its size.

The 1919 season of the Sells-Floto circus will start at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Saturday, April 19. It is understood that the route has been so arranged that this big attraction will exhibit in St. Louis, Missouri for one week, beginning on April 28. An extensive trip through the east has also been planned for the coming season.

C. W. Finney has been engaged for the coming season, dividing honors with Ed P. Wiley in doing local contracting. Jack Oshier will manage advertising car No. 1.

The Sells-Floto show will leave its Denver winter quarters about April 12 and will be in Oklahoma City about five days ahead of the opening date for rehearsals.

The following letter from my old friend Earl Shipley, from overseas will certainly prove interesting reading as Earl tells how the circuses run "over there."

"Coblenz, Germany, Feb. 6, 1919.

"Editor, the *Billboard*,

"Cincinnati, Ohio

"Dear Sir: Have been receiving the *Billboard* now and then and I thought that perhaps your many readers might be interested in hearing of the Wilhelm Hagenbeck Animal Circus of Hamburg, Germany.

"The Hagenbeck show opened the season of 1919 in Coblenz Feb. 1 to a good house, chiefly composed of American soldiers. The big top looks more like a building than it does a 'top' being a round top of about 200 feet with sidewalls of lumber. No poles are used, but a system of rafters and cross pieces support the top which is made of 16-18 ounce canvas.

"In the center of the top is a big stage about the size of an American regulation ring, entirely enclosed by a big arena. The band of about 16 pieces is on a balcony over the runway leading to the pad room and dressing room. All numbers are presented on the stage inside the steel



The Carl Hagenbeck Tierpark entrance, as rebuilt after World War I. Dave Price collection.

arena. The performance was very good and ran smoothly, except for long waits occasioned by moving the heavy props. Am enclosing a program printed in both English and German.

"The feature act was the Hagenbeck Tigers, six in number, presented by trainer Felchmann and the American soldiers were as generous with their applause for the German trainer as were the Germans themselves. Included in the program were two bear acts, one a polar bear and the other a brown bear. An elephant act of five "bulls," Shetland pony drill, leaping hounds, a wire act, an iron jaw act by four girls, Russian dancers, clown with nine trained geese and closing with an act of six lions that had the audience sitting up in their seats. The show lasted two and a half hours, including the waits. Will try and send some pictures of the show later on.

"One of the performers who speaks French told me that they had some very hard times during the war, as the government has confiscated all of the horses and most of the animals died. Here is a partial list of the animals lost, allowing for my poor knowledge of French: 11 elephants, 16 tigers, 40 odd lions and many smaller animals. I think he possibly included animals of the Hagenbeck Zoo at Hamburg. The show travels overland, the performers living in wagons built and painted to represent railway coaches. They have no side shows of any kind and no menagerie. About fifty people are carried with the show and I counted 50 wagons, not including cages.

"I was invited back to the dressing room, but was forced to decline as we are not allowed to fraternize with the German people. I had some pictures with me of the Hagenbeck-Wallace show and also of the Sun Bros. show and sent them back to the dressing room for some of the performers to see. I met a few of them later and they informed me that they hoped to go to America sometime as

there is no money to be made in Europe. Before I forget it, two clowns put on the old barbershop gag, so I felt quite at home. The clowns were made up neatly and their clown suits were of expensive material and heavily spangled. Most of their stuff was the old-fashioned talking clown sort.

"This letter is assuming lengthy proportions, so I will close. I hope to get back to the states some time this summer. At present my sole duties consist of putting on shows three nights a week through the American area in Germany. I have a minstrel show of 30 persons and I am doing 'bumps' in an acrobatic act with George LaSalle. I have been appointed manager and director of all entertainments in the third corps sanitary train. Am enclosing a souvenir program of our show. Will be glad to hear from all friends and will be more than glad to get back, as I have been over here 14 months now."

March 22, 1919

I am almost daily asked the question of how many Ringling boys there were and if they all originally had an interest in the great Ringling show. I thought of a few facts in this connection which might be interesting to the reader.

While there were seven of the Ringling brothers, and all of them connected with the show, there were but five of the original owners of the show, and it remained so up to the time of the death of the late Al Ringling. Gus Ringling, the older of the brothers, was always connected with the show as manager of the advance and was a salaried man. He was the first of the brothers to die and never owned a money interest in



The seven Ringling brothers with mother, father and sister in the 1890s.

the great show. The next of the brothers to die was Otto, who could always be found in the office and was considered the financial manager, always looking after the finances.

When he passed away he made bequests to the widow of Gus and her daughters and also to a sister, Mrs. Norton [North], and then turned his fifth of the business of the show over to Henry, youngest of the brothers, who up to that time had not owned an interest in the show.

Then Albert passed away and he settled several hundred thousand dollars on his wife and many bequests to some of his employees and also his sister; the balance of his portion went back in the great show for the benefit of the brothers, who are still in control.

It was something like two years later that Henry, youngest of the brothers, passed away, leaving a wife and two brothers who were well cared for. By the way, the only one by the name of Ringling who still makes her home during the summer in Baraboo is his sister, who stays in the home built by her brother, Charles [Al] Ringling. Although Mrs. Norton [North] still makes her home in Baraboo, the three Ringlings each make their home in different cities. The three Ringlings still own and manage the great Ringling and Barnum & Bailey combined. John and Alfred Ringling make their home in New York and Charles Ringling in Evanston, Illinois.

Some ten or twelve years ago I vis-

ited the show in Madison on the third of July and was the Ringlings' guest at dinner in the cook tent. All the different Ringlings and their wives were there, including Mother Ringling. I was given the seat of honor at the dinner table at the right of Mother Ringling whose face beamed with joy on their dinner, as she visited with her different sons. If there ever was a proud mother, it was the mother of those boys who had lived to see their greatest ambition realized, for at that time they were the owners and managers of the world's greatest show.

While there have been hundreds of columns written on their show all over the United States in the different newspapers, and better in a way than I could possibly write, my close connection with the brothers in a business way, dates back to the middle 80's. Much of the show property then which helped to build them up in their early career was bought from Adam Forepaugh and I am in a position to give the reader facts in a way possibly that no one else could.

The first time that Adam Forepaugh ever saw a Ringling to know him, Charles Ringling came on to the show and introduced himself to Mr. Forepaugh and told him he was there to see if he could get some animals or cages that they could spare out of this great show. Adam Forepaugh showed him through the

menagerie and at that time Charles Ringling was quite a young man and looked younger than he was. He was barely out of his teens. After he had gone, Mr. Forepaugh told me that the Ringling brothers would eventually be the great showmen of the country, for they were not only good, conservative businessmen, but also they were together and filled in the high positions around the show and could not but help--under their watchful eyes--to make a success. The Ringlings were always welcome to his show and could get anything that they wanted.

For many years the great Ringling show has opened the season for several weeks at the Coliseum in Chicago and the Barnum & Bailey at Madison Square Garden, New York. I, for many years, have been their guest on April 24, which is my birthday, but this year I will be a cast-away, as the combined shows will be in Madison Square Garden, New York for some weeks and the distance is too great. But the great combined shows will probably be in Chicago for several days some time during the season, at which time I will try and spend a day or two looking at all the great combined shows of the world, for all of the great ones have been gathered in and have little or no opposition.

Now the great question among circus people will be who will be the coming great showmen after the Ringlings have passed on? For all or nearly all of the great shows of the country for more than half a century have started in a very small way and gradually, year after year, have built up until they were the greatest of their kind in the country. Possibly the next move will be to show the great Ringling and Barnum & Bailey show combined in moving pictures. For instance, if it was taken at the Five Points in Janesville on their arrival in the morning, and first show the manager's horse and buggy which are always first to unload, then on down to the cook tents, wagons and the start of the great stores as soon as they are landed on the ground, then the big teams with their drivers starting for the fair grounds, the laying out of the lot by the boss canvasman and his helpers and some thousand or more people at their

breakfast in the cook tent, with all the performances, the tearing down of the great city of canvas and the different sections pulling out of town, possibly for a hundred-mile run to the next stand, it would make a picture that would certainly please millions of people the world over. Possibly this is only a dream of my own and may or may not come to pass. But if it should, I certainly want to live long enough to say: "This is the greatest picture of its kind that was ever thrown upon the screen."

March 29, 1919

While but few of the boys from the front have returned that were with the circus, they are satisfied to take a job on the farm.

The following story is told by a farmer who had employed an acrobat to help him out on the farm during the present winter: Complaints of many kinds are received from various disgruntled persons at the Federal State Employment Agency, but the first complaint registered this morning caused J. W. Walden to wax mirthful. Some time ago a farmer living close to Yukon ordered a farm hand, and the order was promptly filled. The farmer came in for a talk with Walden this morning.

"I wanted a farm hand, but you sent out an acrobat," he declared. "Here is just what that fellow did: Taught my boy to stand on his head the very first thing; taught the colts and calves tricks of the circus; camouflaged the geese and ducks till the barnyard like to went crazy; taught the hogs to come for feed by knocking on a hollow log with a [line missing?] the time when woodpeckers begin their spring drive."

In addition the farmer said his "hand" placed a trapeze in his room just over the farmer's head and performed at night, saying he couldn't sleep until he had taken his exercise.

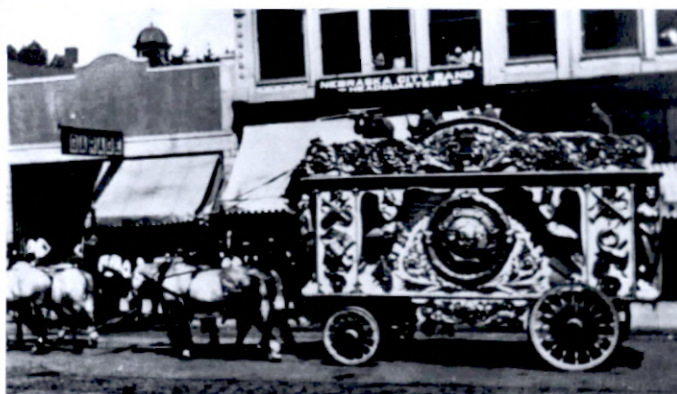
"I finally told the durn fool he could consider himself gassed and get his pay check, but he said he

would lay off some of his worst tricks and ended up by getting me to agree to pay him 50 cents a day more. He's a bear at working, believe me, and does nearly as much with his feet as most of my help have been doing with their hands."

While the large shows usually opened up their season along about the first of May, many of them are expecting to open something like two weeks earlier this season on account of the appearance of early spring.

Welcome spring! No more joyous slogan could be echoed than this to the circus proprietors who have had their shows in winter quarters since the early part of last October. Just as the clean-up time of the season came, Old Man Influenza made his appearance, and presto, the season was closed, and as the bard has said, this has been the winter of discontent. With the soaring prices of feed stuffs and the extra long time necessary to keep the stock at winter quarters, spring is surely welcome. The fast diminishing piles of hay and the disappearing oats have made the keeping of the feed pile tab a job for an expert accountant, but it will all soon be over and the tide will flow the other way, if there is going to be any tide this year.

Didn't the show business behave well under the conditions existing last fall when, not only the circus, but also all other branches of the profession were compelled to close their



A Yankee Robinson Circus parade in 1919.

doors for a long period? If that many wallpaper factories or buttonhole emporium would have been closed as abruptly and for as long a time, benefits would have been organized and

subscriptions asked for the relief of everyone connected with the crafts. But not so with the showfolks. They submitted to the inevitable with almost a smile and started for home, appropriate for the entire production and for the managers of tent shows where they have since refitted and, in some instances, enlarged their outfits for the coming season and have gone ahead with improvements the same as though the season had closed in its usual profitable manner. Optimism personified indeed. The circuses greatly changed from the last year. There are but nine large organizations on the road: Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey, Sells-Floto, Hagenbeck-Wallace, John Robinson, Yankee Robinson, Charles Sparks, Al G. Barnes, Walter Main's Shows and Gentry Brothers.

With the increased cost entering into the operation of circuses including railroad fare, provisions, advertising, labor and every other department, it surely is a survival of the fittest. A few years ago there were twenty-two recognized tent shows on the road and now the list has shrunk to the above number. Surely the city dads and other law-making bodies that have been so zealous in their efforts to wring the last dollar out of tent shows for licenses, will notice by this shrinking list that "all is not gold that glitters," and where under the sun is an amusement that makes an effort to give as much for nothing and for the price of the ticket as the circus? As much money is expended on the street parade as any theatrical show that charges \$2.00 admission are continually seeking to enlarge their outfits and give more for the money, while other branches of the show business as equally industrious in trying to give less. Will the time come when the scions of justice will realize that not only are the high license taxes unjust, inequitable, unfair, but in most cases illegal?

What the outcome of the coming season as regards business will be is problematical. While the hall show business is on the top wave of prosperity at the present time, this has proved in the past to be no indication of what the tent shows might expect in the line of patronage as the two forms of entertainment differ entirely

in their clientele.

A few years ago, when the theatrical business was at a very low ebb, the circuses had one of the best seasons of their career. However, we are almost sure of good railroad service and prompt arrivals at exhibition stands for the coming season, as the railroad tonnage is dropping off very rapidly. This ought to make for the prompt handling of the show trains, and with the labor situation returning to normal, the managers may look forward to at least a more pleasant season than the one just passed through.

The circus managers deserve success, for where is there a business of which the details are watched as closely and in which the managers give their constant, personal attention to the extent that they do in the circus business? It is almost a universal practice for the manager of a tent show not to leave the grounds from the time he arrives in the morning until the tents are dropped at night, and then usually to go to the train to finish up the night's work. It is truly a grind and their success is not only deserved, but earned.

The general agents will have a little less figuring to do this year due to the decreased number of shows on the road, and this fact should enable them to route their attractions to the best advantage, both from a railroad-standpoint and that of patronage, so it looks at this writing as to the only thing necessary for a pleasant season in 1919 is business. If that very important detail is forthcoming, the managers should feel that the long winter vigil in watching the exchequer and listening to the popping of the wires on the bales of hay has not been in vain.

April 5, 1919

It was long ago when the editor-in-chief of the Janesville *Daily Gazette* decided that the "Side Lights on the Circus Business" must be given to a shorthand reporter, not later than Wednesday of the week the "Side Lights" would appear, and so the circus story has appeared every Saturday evening without fail.

This Wednesday, April the 2nd, is very significant to me as it was

thirty seven years ago today that I made my first start at Washington, D.C. to try and make good as a ticket seller for a show many times the size of the Burr Robbins, to which I was connected for five years. Many of my friends thought that it would be impossible for me to make good. One very close friend said that when I left, he would not bid me good-bye for that he would expect me home within ten days.

A part of this story I have told you before, but as this is the 37th anniversary, I thought it would not be out of place to give you something of an idea of the anxiety that I had, wondering every day and a good part of the night if it was going to be possible for me to make good.

At the opening day, the show in the afternoon had a larger crowd much larger than I had been used to selling to. But I got through in what I thought was pretty fair shape. After all the people had got into the show, Adam Forepaugh came out to the wagon and told me that all the performers, door tenders, reserve seat sellers and sideshow people would have to be paid every Wednesday afternoon, and the working people on Saturday. This made all the work seem rather hard, and yet there was nothing to do but keep on trying. On my Wednesday payday which

May Wirth.



amounted to about 225 people, I got through with them a little before five o'clock. While I thought it would not be possible for me to get away with the work, I did. But then I said to myself, how can I ever pay 500 people (working men) on Saturday? With all the tickets to sell in the afternoon and night, pay the bills continually coming in, I still thought it was a question whether I could do it or not.

A week and a half after the opening, we opened up in Philadelphia for a two weeks' run on Monday. While the great canvas held the crowds at the matinee in the afternoon, at night it was said at the time that more than five thousand people were turned away. I will never forget how big everything looked to me around the show, the big wagon in the place of being the size of an ordinary bird cage, which I had been used to with the Burr Robbins show--and the one with the Adam Forepaugh show was the size of an ordinary cottage--the great canvas was four or five times the size of the Burr Robbins. When I took a look at my first tickets, many thousands, I wondered if I would be expected to sell all of them at one performance.

After I made good, I often wondered whether I grew to the show, or the show grew to me. As this season was the \$10,000 beauty season, we had two weeks of the biggest business the show had ever known.

We then took to the one-day stands up through Pennsylvania, taking in Allentown, Lancaster and on all through the state. It was very often then that thousands of people at the evening and afternoon shows were turned away. At Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Adam Forepaugh and the general agent decided to give three shows in order to accommodate the people. This was done, and yet at the evening performance there were thousands of people turned away. In spite of the big receipts of the show, I never let work get the best of me and after Sunday was able to strike up a balance the same as I had done with less than 20 percent of the business when with the Burr Robbins show. Day after day, the

work seemed to grow easier, and one day Adam Forepaugh finally complimented me by saying that I was doing the work in far better shape than he expected I could. He then said: "Young man, your work from now on will get easier for you every day." After a while, regardless of bills that might be coming in, I took my regular dinner hours and closed the wagon for a time as though it belonged to me. Everything seemed to run so smoothly--when one day a man came to the ticket wagon with a bill and found it locked. He then went to the main entrance to the show and asked Mr. Forepaugh how long he would have to wait for his money. "Well," said Mr. Forepaugh, "you will have to wait until the ticket man comes back from his supper, for even in circus business, we have to take the time to eat." On Wednesdays and Saturdays, he often told me when I got through with the payroll for me not to wait to pay any locals bills, lock up my wagon and not open it until the evening show.

This was certainly welcome news to me that I would not always have to be in the wagon. I locked up whenever I got through from that time on, and it then looked as though my days of work were over and that I was my own boss to a certain extent.

The hardest work that I ever did with the show was when the show was in Chicago, which meant early in the wagon in the morning and with but little for dinner and until 11 o'clock at night. Many people have the idea that a week or two weeks spent in the same place makes it easier for the circus, but in every department around the show, it is much easier for the people on the one-day stands for the reason that they get there earlier and as a rule they went right to the sleepers.

After leaving the big city like Chicago where we had a run of two weeks, we would hear every little while someone say around the show, "Give me the one-day stands."

The success of May Wirth, featured with the Santos y Artigas circus in Cuba, has been remarkable. Each night she appeared she received an ovation. The leading citizens of Havana have given her a testimonial signed by Mr. Cameron, manager of the United Cuban Railroad, in appreciation for her wonderful work. In speaking of the equestrienne, Mr. Cameron said: "Santos y Artigas have brought not only a wonderful little artist to Havana, but a charming little lady that has made all Havana love her. It is with deep regret that we see her leave us."

Orrin Davenport has sailed for Key West where he will await the arrival of Miss Wirth and the horses.

The strike in Cuba tied up all the circuses traveling in the island. Miss Wirth's horses were tied up about eight miles from Havana. Miss Wirth signed up with the Ringling Bros.

Newspaper ad for the opening of Ringling-Barnum in Madison Square Garden in 1919.

and Barnum & Bailey combined shows.

A volunteer nurse who has been devoting much of her time this winter to the care of the showfolks stricken with the "flu" is Lottie Smith who was featured at Riverview Park, Chicago, last summer as the tattooed lady. Although a mite of a woman, she never missed a day looking after unfortunates stricken with the influenza who were unable to procure other attendants. Evidently her 98 pounds must be all heart as in many instances she has had to furnish nourishing dainties to the sick and all through the long siege, she has never even received--nor would she accept--compensation.

April 12, 1919

On Saturday, March 29, just two weeks ago, death came and ended the suffering of Adam Forepaugh, Jr., the last one of the famous family of showmen. Although young Forepaugh had been an invalid for several years, his one wish was that he might live long enough to go over to New York and attend the great Ringling and Barnum show at Madison Square Garden. It was while the Barnum and Ringling was giving their afternoon performance, which marked the opening of the great show in New York, that Adam Forepaugh passed away. No one living was closer to him for many years than the writer, and in a way, he was certainly the greatest showman that ever lived.

Not as a manager, but as an all around man with the big show--for the reason that he had every department so fixed in his mind that there was nothing about the great show, which his father managed for so many years, that the young man was not familiar with. If the manager was sick, or for any reason left the show, young Forepaugh was the one who could load and unload the train as well as though he had done it all his life.



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He could take the tape measure and lay out the great canvas absolutely right. He was a good boss hostler and for many years was in five or six acts in the show. There never was a man with his father's great show that put in more hours than did the son.

As soon as the show would close in the fall, the young man would go over to New York for two or three days for a rest. On his return, his helpers were all notified to be at winter quarters at 7 o'clock the next morning ready for work. In his day, he was the greatest animal trainer that ever lived. He was famed not only in this country, but all over Europe where he traveled at different times during the winter and engaged performers and bought animals for the coming season. It was in 1887, which was the first year that the great Forepaugh show was able to go to New York City, that young Forepaugh surprised New York's crowds with many new animal acts that had never been seen before. It was at this time that he had the eight dancing elephants that danced the quadrille just the same as eight people. When at the close of the dances, he would shout, "All waltz" they would hold their trunks together and waltz around the ring with the band playing.

He was also the trainer of "Blondin," the great rope walking pony and of "Fire Fly," the pony that performed on a trapeze from one side of the canvas to the other, and while springing back and forth, he would leap from the wall of fire.

It was in the middle 80's that he insisted that his father allow him to pick out 16 high broncos at Montana and ship them to him at Philadelphia where he trained them during the winter to do almost anything but talk. While he never had the ambition to look after the front of the show or finances, he was worth more money to the big show back of the dressing room and the ring than any man that I ever knew. It was in 1884 that he came out in the spring with the famous boxing elephant called "John L. Sullivan," named after the famous fighter. The boxing elephant was one of the big features of the show for several years and during the winter of '85 young Forepaugh presented the elephant fighter for 20



Zip, the "What is it."

weeks in London, Paris and Berlin at \$1,000 per week.

There were hundreds of nights during my time with the show that when we got through with the work, he would come out to the ticket wagon and say to me: "Hurry up, boss, I want you to go downtown with me. I know where there are lots of nice places." Money did not mean anything to him as he had free access to the treasury at all times ever since he was a boy. While he spent several times any performer's salary with the show, I never thought he was overpaid, for he was one of the best men around the show.

I received several letters from Philadelphia and from two different newspaper men who wanted to know his age and about his achievements in the business years ago.

He was married in the middle '80's to Lilly Deacon, an English woman, who, with three high school horses, were brought over to London as one of the features of the great show. I came out from breakfast at the hotel one morning and there was the young man and Miss Deacon in the carriage and the young man said: "Get in here and I will take you up to the lot." I hesitated, but as he insisted, I got into the buggy. When I was seated, he started down the street in

the wrong direction from the show grounds and when I spoke to him about it, he said: "Never mind, I know where I want to go." In a few moments he drove up in front of a minister's house and smilingly said: "We will get out here. A few minutes ago I made arrangements to get married and thought that we had better come up to the hotel and get you for a witness." "Yes," said I, "you want to get me in trouble. Little does your father think that you are going to get married today, and when he finds out that I was the only witness at the wedding, he probably will tell me to retrace my steps back to Janesville." "Never mind, I will give you more money than he ever would pay you." But strange as it seemed to me, the father was delighted, for Lilly Deacon was a high-class woman in every way and a perfect lady.

His wife, Lilly, survives him and also his step-mother, who many years ago was remarried and makes her home at Atlantic City and in the Bellview Hotel in Philadelphia.

For several years in the middle 80's he made his home at the Bingham House on the corner of 11th and Market Streets in Philadelphia where he would always stop spring and fall and after the close of the show. A few days before I would arrive the young man would get up in the morning and tell the landlord that if the lone countryman from Janesville did not show up in a day or two, he would wire him to come at once.

It was part of my work in the spring to help his father to fit out the show and for this reason take a lot of work off of his father.

Adam Forepaugh, Sr. was a very interesting character to visit with and at different times he spent many hours in the ticket wagon with me telling me of their troubles in foreign countries while in search of talented showmen for the coming year. It seems that whether our fame is little or great, we have to pass on when our times comes just the same.

Sometimes when I look back and recollect some of the old days, it seems almost like a dream, and yet it is all true. It was while I was associated with this young man and his famous father that I spent many of the best years of my life.

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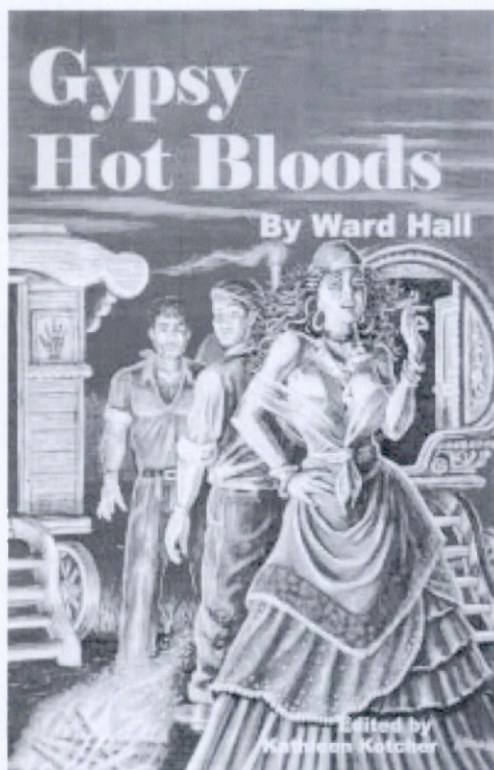
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